



# THINKING ABOUT RELIGION



# THINKING ABOUT RELIGION

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## PREFATORY NOTE

No other human experience has as many and as significant implications for man's individual and social welfare as that which arises from his need and quest for spiritual values. Why then should religion have become a battleground for theologians, a subject of disputation for philosophers, a source of sectarian animosities and persecutions, and even a justification for bloody wars? Only a distortion of the true religious experience could have produced such disastrous results.

This small book is the fruit of many years of thought on this critical question, and the only right the author claims to be heard on the subject is his serious effort to deal with it with as much scientific detachment as is possible in a topic of a highly personal nature.

M. S.



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## *Chapter One*

### **THE NEED FOR THINKING ABOUT RELIGION**

No subject with which the human mind might occupy itself is as worthy of serious, earnest thought as the nature of the religious experience and its bearing on human welfare. There are two reasons for this need for thought. In the first place, the annals of religion are filled with narratives of bitter controversies, enmities, and persecutions, and stained with the blood of murders, executions, and massacres. There have been verbal battles about morality, art, science, philosophy; but these have been innocent and harmless, even friendly encounters, compared with the battles of fire and sword that have raged in the name of religion. This deplorable condition has given rise to two attitudes towards religion among the unthinking, namely, that of defamation and that of vindication. The defamers see only evil in religion and would eradicate it, while the vindicators seek to defend it either by denying the evils, or by the easy device of calling down anathemas on those who dare call attention to them. Both camps only succeed in intensifying the heat of religious controversy rather than in throwing light upon the nature of the problem. Both parties miss the essential point, which is, that the very intensity and bitterness of the controversy indicate that religion touches something basic in human nature; that it involves

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something of grave concern to human beings; or there would not be so much ado about it. Beneath all serious disagreement about religion there must be agreement on the importance of religion, whatever it may be, and the disagreement must arise from the failure to examine what it actually is. It is always easier to quarrel than it is to examine, for quarrelling calls only for passion, while examining necessitates the painful exercise of thought. As Professor Whitehead writes: "In each age of the world distinguished by high activity there will be found at its culmination, and among the agencies leading to that culmination, some profound cosmological outlook, implicitly accepted, impressing its own type upon the current springs of action. This ultimate cosmology is only partly expressed, and the details of such expression issue into derivative specialized questions of violent controversy. The intellectual strife of an age is mainly concerned with these latter questions of secondary generality which conceal a general agreement upon first principles almost too obvious to need expression, and almost too general to be capable of expression."<sup>1</sup>

Religion is one of these ultimate cosmological outlooks, independent of time and place, and of vast human importance. But instead of occupying ourselves with ascertaining its primary nature we waste our powers in controversies about its secondary derivatives. Wherever there is strife there is something wrong; and one party to the strife is as much at fault as the other, for each is concerned only with having its will prevail rather than with the truth. The search for truth brings about

<sup>1</sup>Adventures Of Ideas. 1933. pp. 13-14.

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cooperation; it never creates controversy. So the first need for thought in religion arises from the existence of controversy, calling for an attempt to ascertain the causes that give rise to it. A second need for thought arises from the necessity of examining the nature of the religious experience itself, apart from controversies about it, since it is only as the truth of religion comes to the fore that the threatening clouds of controversy can be permanently dispelled. Thought devoted to the discovery of the sources of religious controversy clears the field for thought concerning what religion is as a basic human need. "Do you then be reasonable," Socrates advises his friend, "and do not mind whether the teachers of religion are good or bad, but think only of religion herself. Try to examine her well and truly; and if she be evil, seek to turn away all men from her; but if she be what I believe she is, then follow her, and be of good cheer." That religion is basically a good, no one familiar with the great religious minds of the ages can doubt. That endless evils have been committed in her name, only the mentally blind and bigoted can deny. So we turn our attention, first, to the sources of evil in religion in order to clear the field for the examination of religion in its basic nature.

## HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND RELIGION

Religion is of the stuff of human experience. No one invented it or imposed it on man. Nor was it bestowed on man from some unearthly, mysterious source. Were



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there anything arbitrary or artificial about it, it would have died of its own lack of vitality. It persists because human life, from which it springs, persists; and so long as human life lasts, religion will last. It is as natural a part of man as are hunger, thirst, love, or beauty. But every natural and normal human experience is subject to a variety of distortions. And such is the case with religion. We must therefore seek for one of the causes of evil in religion in the distortions to which all human experiences are subject.

### 1. *Individual Differences in Experience*

Human beings vary widely in degree of susceptibility to any experience. The differences range all the way from least susceptibility, where the experience is so vague as to be practically functionless, to highest susceptibility, where the experience is so intense and vivid as to possess the individual. This means that what is highly significant to one person may be relatively insignificant to another. And this relative vitality of experience is not due to training or education, but arises from the very warp and woof of the physiological constitution. The capacity for experience along any line is thus a talent and not an acquisition. Whatever power of experience lies latent in the individual is subject to development. But no amount of training, preaching, teaching, or attempts at indoctrinating will lift one to a level that is above his natural reach. Education, training, can only bring forth; they cannot put in. Each person can possess only what he already has; more than he already has he cannot be made to possess. Experience is

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never given; it is taken. And one takes what one needs. The seed of experience is planted in the soil of mind. What happens to the seed depends on the mental soil in which it is planted; and mental soils differ. That which attains full fruition in one mind dies a-borning in another. Experience is made within, not implanted from the outside; so that every person lives in a world which is different from the world of every other person, in degree, although not in kind. We are alike only in being different in the things in which we are alike. Whatever is equally significant to all persons is also equally insignificant to all of them. Only insignificant experience has the same value to all, because it has value to none. A temperature of 80 degrees in a room means the same to all occupants. It means 80 degrees. As such it is meaningless. As warm or cold or comfortable it varies from person to person. As such it is significant, because it varies.

- \* The degree of significance of experience determines its degree of functioning in the life of the individual. An experience is at the highest point of livingness when the person feels himself to be but the channel or medium through which that experience flows. This supreme condition in experience is genius. Thus, a Beethoven lived music, a Keats lived poetry, a Socrates lived the moral good, a Jesus lived God. They were intoxicated with the experience. Take that experience from them, sober them up, and you take their life from them. For the general run of human beings these experiences are but perfunctory concerns, something to enjoy from time to time or something to talk and quarrel about. So, as experience

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attains greater significance it becomes increasingly transforming in its effect on the life of the person. As the experience is being born, the person is being reborn with it. And unless the person is reborn in the experience, the experience itself was not born.

From these considerations on the relative vitality of experience from person to person there follow several consequences of importance for an understanding of religion and the causes of the evils that exist in its name.

In the first place, it should be obvious that if we want to know what religion is we must inquire of the few who lived it, and not of the large numbers who make a profession of it. In each age the religious genius stands solitary, lonesome, silent and lost in the midst of the babble of voices hawking alleged religious wares for sale to the public at various prices, each voice lauding its own goods and sneering at that of other salesmen. But it is the religious genius who knows, and because he knows he will not shout, so that his quiet voice of instruction and guidance is drowned in the discordant chorus of claims and counterclaims of the public merchants of religion. If we want to know what science is, we must ask those who made science, the great scientists of the ages, and not those who have science to sell; if we want to know what art is, we must ask those who made art, the great artistically creative minds of the ages, and not those who traffic in art. Likewise, we can find out what the religious experience is only from those who lived it, in whom it operated in its pure, unadulterated form, to whom it was not a convenience or a business, but a living necessity. They will not come to us,

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for they have nothing to sell or hand out. We must go to them and inquire of them by putting ourselves in touch with their lives, their world, and their activities. What we carry away from such a quest is bound to be truth, for it comes from the pure fountain of the living waters of truth, which is life and not talk. We cannot expect the truth from those whose concern is not so much with the quality of the goods they have for sale as with quick sales and big profits. And nothing but evil can come from falsification, whether intentional or unintentional. But only good can come from the truth of religion; and it is available to us if we are willing to seek it. It is not for sale at any price. It cannot be bought; but it can be found.

In the second place, it is necessary to admit that a religious experience of a sufficient degree of intensity to make it function in the life of the person is not within the reach of all, so that any attempt to spread or sell religion wholesale can only result in its degradation. It would be sheer madness to hold that anyone can grasp the scientific concepts of a Newton or an Einstein, the aesthetic concepts of a Keats or a Beethoven, or the moral concepts of a Plato. And it is just as insane to suppose that the religious status of a Jesus is open to all comers. Just as we have ranges of intelligence from the imbecile to the genius, so there are esthetic imbeciles and geniuses, moral imbeciles and geniuses, and religious imbeciles and geniuses. To sell religion wholesale is like selling truth, goodness or beauty to all comers, which can be done only by reducing each to its irreducible minimum, or by finding out what will be acceptable to

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all and calling *that* the good or the true or the beautiful. Beethoven could be sold only by jazzing him up for popular consumption, and Keats would have to be revised to comply with the standards of Edgar A. Guest. If all can be religious, then religion must be what all can stand or what all want. And what all can stand and want is as much as possible for as little as possible. The result is that each merchant of religion vies with every other merchant in claiming superiority for his brand of goods, and each buyer of a particular religious goods boasts of possessing the safest and purest spiritual article. People are urged to accept religion, to become religious, which is like imploring them to get hungry, to grow to be six feet tall, or to fall in love, and offering them sure and easy ways and means of accomplishing these ends. The only end actually accomplished is the cheapening of religion and the deception of people into the belief that they possess something which is actually out of their reach.

He who is religious-minded, who has the potentiality for the experience, will find channels through which the experience will flow and exercise itself. But he who does not possess the inner need in a sufficient degree to seek an outlet for it can only be deceived by astute salesmanship to accept something just as good. Experiences are not generated from without. They originate from within. Hunger cannot be induced by the mere placing of food before a person, no matter how tempting it may be. But if he is hungry he will seek food. So the religious-hungry mind needs no one to urge it to

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be religious. We invariably already possess what we set out to seek. What we seek is a greater abundance and a confirmation of what we already possess. And the sole indication of the presence of a need is in the searching which it compels. Whatever one is not seeking he will not find, and even though it be presented to him he will not realize its value.

### 2. Experience as *Subjective*, *Objective*, and *Objectified*.

Experiences are classifiable into subjective and objective, on the basis of the source of their stimulations. Hunger, for instance, which has its stimulus within the body, is a subjective experience, whereas sound, or color, or taste and smell, with their stimuli coming from outside the body, are objective experiences. Objective experiences are public, in that they exist for every person who is confronted by the stimulating situation. An article of food can be seen, touched, smelled and tasted by any number of persons, but only one of them may be hungry for it. Hunger is a private experience.

A third class of experiences arises from the fact that certain private experiences are projected by being referred to some external object. These are objectified experiences, or private experiences that are felt to be of a public nature. The experiences that come under this category are the so-called spiritual values: the true, the good, the beautiful, and the holy. The subjective and objective experiences are the practical values, the values through which we live; while the objectified are the ideal values, the values for which we live.

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Why are ideal values objectified? It is of utmost importance that this question be raised, for it is in these values that human beings battle each other, impose on each other, and do so particularly in the sphere of religion.

The reason why these values are objectified is that an experience must be referred to something tangible if it is to have the flavor of reality. A subjective experience is real because it is somewhere in the body, and an objective experience is real because it comes from some object. But where is that beauty, or that goodness, or that truth, or that holiness? I don't feel it anywhere within me, since it is not only a part of me but all of me. It also draws me toward something outside of myself; something beyond myself. I am pulled toward the object I feel to be beautiful; I am projected into it, and so I attribute or refer my experience to where I live, to the object. And so it is the object that possesses the quality of beauty. The beauty comes to me from the object because I have become objectified. And so it is with the rest of the ideal values; they are projected into some person or object and experienced as coming from that person or object.

The subjective and objective experiences serve the biological needs that preserve the animal self. The objectified preserve the human self. And it is only as the animal self is transcended by and transformed into the human self that human life is in the making. It is therefore those experiences that include the totality of our being, the experiences in which the self becomes

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selfless because it is whole, complete, that are objectified, that are placed without and not within ourselves, since they are without selfishness. Selflessness looks out; selfishness looks in. Selflessness fills the outer from the inner, and by doing so enriches itself by enriching the outer. Selfishness fills the inner from without and by impoverishing it impoverishes the inner. The satisfaction of the partial personality, of segmental needs, depends upon taking in. The needs of the total personality, of the whole and wholesome being, are fulfilled by giving out. The partial, being the incomplete, the insufficient, calls for receiving from without; whereas the whole, the complete and sufficient gives of itself, flows out of itself because of its own fullness. The outpouring is the evidence of the presence of fulfillment, and as the fulfillment pours itself out it is also being newly and increasingly fulfilled. Objectification is then the process of fulfilling by outpouring, of receiving by giving, the process of finding oneself by losing oneself.

The result of objectification is the feeling that what is within us has been given or implanted in us from the outside; that we are but the recipients of something, some gift bestowed upon us. Now, so long as the objectified is recognized to be what it is, namely, a private experience referred to an object, or embodied in an object, the person will make no attempt to explain the experience in terms of the qualities of the object. But when the distinction is not drawn, the object becomes the source of the experience and it is therefore assumed that any person in contact with the object should have the



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experience. And if the experience is not forthcoming, attempts are made to inculcate it by calling attention to the properties of the object. Thus attempts are made to indoctrinate people with these objectified values as self-existent entities, as having objective existence, and therefore to be accepted and believed in. So living experiences are translated into formulas, and their acceptance urged as an assurance of the presence of the experience. The question then becomes: to accept or not to accept. He who accepts the formula is assured to have had the saving experience. But all he has is some high-sounding words with which he deceives himself, and which he uses for the purpose of "converting" or deceiving others. The amount of mischief that has been produced by this formalization of life is exceeded by no other mischief-provoking source in the annals of men. Life is not a formula, but it is a form. From form, formulas may be derived, but they are not the form. As formulas divorced from the form, they are no more than the dead limbs of the Tree of Life. And those who accept the formula for the form are dead to the experience that gives the form its informing, that is, its vitalizing quality.

### 3. *The Supernatural*

The rationalization of dogma by the religions as a truth superior to reason arises from a claim for the existence of two distinct and independent realms of truth: one the realm of the natural, the other the realm of the supernatural. The truths of the natural realm are held to belong to the domain of reason, while the truths of the supernatural world are said to be given by reve-

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lation to some favored individuals in some mysterious manner, who become its custodians and whose divine prerogative and duty it becomes to spread them abroad as authoritative and infallible. These truths are not to be questioned, since they are beyond question. To question them is to insult divinity; to be guilty of blasphemy. And since they come from a superior source they are not only beyond reason, beyond human intelligence, but are superior to the truths of reason.

It is because of this identification of religion with the supernatural as interpreted by the religions, and the setting up of a special privileged group as its custodians, guardians, and promulgators, that the supernatural has fallen into disrepute, and religion and God with it.

All this is a blunder. Because the historical religions have corrupted the concept of the supernatural, as they have corrupted the concept of faith, is no reason for throwing it out. As well say that science, art, morality should be abolished because of the corrupting they have suffered, and the sins that have been committed in their name. Besides, a human experience cannot be thrown out by order. And no one ever deliberately invented the supernatural. It is a normal aspect of natural human experience, and it can no more be abolished than can human nature itself. What the supernatural needs is understanding, not attacking or defending. What, then, is the role of the supernatural in natural human experience?

There are no natural, as distinct from supernatural, experiences. All experiences are natural experiences, but some natural experiences are felt by someone to be supernatural, to be above or beyond some other experi-

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ences. We have seen in a previous connection that the human mind is inclined to draw a distinction between the values it lives *by* and the values it lives *for*. The values we live by are means towards ends. They cater to biological survival. The values we live for are ends in themselves. They propel us onwards; they take us out of ourselves, out of one self into another self. So there are two selves in every self: a perceptual, actual self, and an imaginative, ideal, or potential self. One self is here and now seeking to maintain itself; the other is off in the distance searching to establish itself. The one oppresses us, crying out for the satisfaction of its immediate needs; the other expresses us, beckons us on to a self of completion. In the one there is turmoil, strife; in the other there is peace and repose. This is the Socratic body and soul of the *Phaedo*, and also the charioteer driving his two horses of the *Phaedrus*. One horse, as Plato describes him, "is upright and cleanly made; he has a lofty neck and an aquiline nose; his color is white, and his eyes dark; he is a lover of honor and modesty and temperance, and the follower of true glory; he needs no touch of the whip, but is guided by word and admonition only." This is the self as soul. "The other is a crooked lumbering animal, put together anyhow; he has a short thick neck; he is flat faced and of a dark color, with grey eyes and blood-red complexion; the mate of insolence and pride, shag-eared and deaf, hardly yielding to whip and spur."

But the two horses cannot be separated from each other. They cannot exist without each other. The lesser cannot exist without the greater, of which it is the lesser;

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the lower cannot exist without the higher, of which it is the lower. The one grows out of the other. But each is given a dwelling place, a local habitation and a name, in keeping with its nature. Each is placed within a realm of its own. The one, because it is an actuality, is placed in the world of actuality, the natural. The other, because it is ideational, not as yet actual, bodily, worldly, is superior, unworldly or supernatural.

So the supernatural is not opposed to or distinct from the natural, but is a creation out of the natural. The supernatural is the objectification by the human mind of its ideal values, a projection of them into a realm, a heaven, of pure forms. Since the religious experience is the purest and highest of these ideal values, the supernatural becomes its peculiar abode, and hence the association between religion and the supernatural.

## SOME RELIGIOUS TERMINOLOGY

### 1. *Religion and Religions*

The connection between religion and the religions is similar to the relationship that exists between science and the sciences, or art and the arts. But with this difference: that while there is peace among the sciences as well as among the arts, among the religions there is clash and conflict. Why the difference? The answer is that there is peace among the sciences because each science is concerned with a disinterested search for truth in the particular field of its interest. And since

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the truth of one science is also the truth of any other science, all scientists constitute one family in which each member respects every other member. The same condition prevails in the different arts. Each art is seeking beauty, and the beauty of one is the beauty of another, expressed through different media. So scientists do not engage in debates as to which science is superior to any other science, nor do painters, musicians and poets fill the air with disputes about the relative aesthetic status of their respective arts. If such debates occurred among scientists or artists it would be looked upon as a good-natured joke by the contestants as well as by those who listened to them. The physicist will not claim to possess a superior truth to the chemist, or the chemist to the physiologist. Nor will the composer hold out for a superior beauty to that of the painter, or the painter to the musician or poet. Even when one science claims to be more exact than some other science, it is not put forward as a boast, nor in order to belittle the other sciences. Each science aims at exactness in its own field, and recognizes its advantages or limitations. No physiologist feels insulted when he is told that his science is not as exact as is that of the physicist. He knows it and admits it, and strives to raise the status of his own field of research. His interest is in the science, not in himself or in his superiority to the others.

The case with the religions is quite different. The aim of each is to establish itself as superior to all the others, even if it has to resort to fire and sword to exterminate its rivals. But religion is religion, as truth is truth, and beauty is beauty. Just as there can be no Jewish truth or

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Jewish beauty or Jewish goodness, and Christian truth or Christian beauty or Christian goodness, so there can be no Jewish religion and Christian religion. There can only be a Jewish distortion of religion and a Christian distortion of religion. There can be no varieties of religion, as there can be no varieties of hunger, of love, of truth, of justice, or of virtue. But there can be, and there are, corruptions of love, of truth, of justice, and of any other human values. So there are corruptions of religion in the religions. And the corruptions arise from the fact that the religions are not concerned with religion but with the promulgation of their particular brand of goods. Their interest is not in religion but in a market. Jesus, Buddha, Confucius were of one mind and of one heart. Their alleged followers and disciples are at each others' throats. Here lies the distinction between religion and religions. Religion is unity, harmony, oneness. Religions are characterized by hatreds, distrust, and schisms. Hence they are not religion, but its negation. They are not religion, but politics parading in the name of religion. The struggle between them is for power, not for peace. It is but too true that the greatest liabilities of genius are its disciples. They have eyes but they see not, and ears but they hear not. With their eyes and ears they see and hear the letter, because their hearts and their minds are not large enough to grasp or feel the spirit. If they felt and grasped the spirit they could not be separated by the letter, for whereas the letters are many, the spirit is one. They see as through a glass darkly, but not face to face. The bickerings of the religions would astonish and scandalize those in whose

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names they exist. The genius labors and brings forth blessed fruit. The disciples shout, rage, hurl curses and anathemas at each other. What would Jesus have done had he been present at Nicea or Chalcedon, or if he were to visit the churches of Christendom on a Sunday? And what would Paul say were he to step into the Vatican, provided he were admitted, to kiss the Pope's ring? And how would Jeremiah feel in a million-dollar synagogue with a \$25,000-a-year rabbi pleading for self-sacrifice and self-denial from a platform of which the cost of the carpet alone would clothe and feed thousands of hungry, naked children?

Truth never clashes. Where there is clash there is falsehood; and those who defend and promote the clash are promulgators of falsehood and not prophets of truth. Their interest is in personal gain, not in human good. The religions cannot have truth in them, for if they possessed truth there could be no religions, only religion.

### *2. Religion and Religious Institutions*

To understand what religion is in its nature as genuine human experience rather than as a topic of controversy or indoctrination, we must draw a further distinction between religion and religious institutions. They are related, but they are not identical. It is easy and convenient for any institution or organization to give itself a name, and proceed on the assumption that it practices or advocates that which the name designates. Rarely does an institution examine its practices and procedures in terms of the meaning of the name it bears. More

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often, if not invariably, it defines the name it bears in terms of its practices and procedures. Thus, an educational institution proceeds on the assumption that education is that which it is doing, although it is very vague in its conception as to just what it is that it is doing. The business of institutions is therefore much more with defending their procedures than with examining their objectives and accomplishments in terms of the nature of the human need that brought them into existence and which they are to serve. Just because an institution calls itself educational does not mean that it is carrying on the function of education. Whether or not it is educational it can determine only by a careful study of the function of education in relation to life, and what the educational process must be as a living event. Unless its procedures are in keeping with a clear-cut vision of the human need it serves, it is only on the way without knowing where it is going or why, and it is bound to mislead those whom it is supposed to lead.

The relationship between human needs and institutions is that between means and ends. The institution is the means, the human need is the end. All life tends towards organization, which means unity, harmony, wholeness, or keeping togetherness. And so it is with each human experience. It seeks to order itself, to establish laws for itself, laws that grow out of its own inherent nature, and through which it can function most readily and most completely. So institutions arise as channels for the flow of human experience. We therefore have the channel for truth which we call the sciences; the channel for beauty, or the arts; the chan-



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nel of love, or marriage and the home; the channel for justice, or government and its various functions; and the other channels for organized, orderly living in its manifold forms and manifestations. These organizations we call human institutions. They represent the minimum requirements for order in life but they are not life. We know there is a minimum requirement for scientific procedure. No procedure can be scientific unless this minimum requirement is observed. But neither is there science just because the requirement for scientific procedure is met. The laws of scientific procedure do not make science; but wherever there is science these laws are also present. The laws of artistic procedure are present wherever there is beauty. But beauty is not produced by the mere following of the laws of artistic activity. Marriage and the home do not make love; it is love that makes marriage and the home. If there is no love there is no marriage nor home, no matter how rigidly the laws are observed.

Organized experiences or institutions, like all organisms, are subject to several diseases, and therefore, unless kept in sound health, produce evil instead of good.

The most serious of these several ailments to which an institution is subject is that instead of remaining an organism, that is a living, growing body, it becomes a mechanism, a dead, stagnant body; and instead of being an aid to life, becomes an obstruction to life. The institution becomes a fixed mold in which life is to be shaped to conform to a standard pattern. Life is looked upon as being only the raw material to be fed into the machinery of institutionalism for the production of cer-

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tain standard goods. If life does not conform it is rejected as a heretic, apostate, or a lost soul.

Another ailment of institutionalism is that the letter of the law becomes the spirit of life, means are substituted for ends, and procedures are mistaken for accomplishments. A person is educated if he has followed some academic goose-step; he is moral if he observes the tenets of some ethical system; he is religious if he practices some ritual or ceremonial or gives his verbal consent to some cult or creed. Life becomes a routine of practices, observances, adherences, and affiliations. To be is to belong; not to belong is to lose one's being. The law and the letter may change from time to time, but life remains subservient to them and is justified by them.

Finally, every institution is invaded by a horde of human parasites who use it for the promotion of private ends, but who pose as its protectors and guardians. These are the so-called "professionals": the professional moralists, ecclesiastics, politicians, and pedagogues. They pose as the promoters of human welfare; but all they promote is social confusion and their own profit and power. Their sole objective is to maintain the status quo of the letter and the law in which they find themselves comfortable, and to hound every one who would expose their nefarious activities.

Organized religion suffers from each of these diseases of institutionalism. Every religious institution tends to corruption and degradation. As Dean Inge states: "Religion embodied in institutions is like those chemical substances which are never found pure. The inspiration, or revelation, which gave it birth, and to safeguard

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which it embodied itself in an organized Church, partly congeals and partly evaporates. The religion, now identified with the institution, mixes itself with earlier forms of belief and traditional mode of worship; it finds room for primitive superstitions and hallowed traditions, changing rather the *nomina* than the *numina* of the cults which it supplanted. It is often entangled with the tortuous policy of a hierarchy, greedy of power and pelf; it is drawn into secular politics and identified with non-religious interests.”<sup>1</sup>

### FAITH

In the religions, faith is claimed to be a form of knowledge that is to be accepted on authority because of its superhuman source, and is therefore either superior to knowledge that comes from human intelligence or is opposed to such knowledge. And since science is knowledge derived from human intelligence, the truth of faith, or religion, is above the truth of science, or in conflict with it. This is the position of the religions. But there can be no lesser and greater truth. There can only be truth and error. Nor can there be a conflict between truth and truth. Truth cannot be opposed to itself; it can be opposed only to falsehood. Consequently we have three alternatives: either the truth of science and the truth of faith are one and the same, the only difference between them being in their source; or one of them is not truth, but error; or faith as interpreted by

<sup>1</sup>W. R. Inge. Protestantism. 1928. p. 2.

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the religions is a misrepresentation. Which is the case?

We can answer this question by taking two considerations into account. In the first place, all truth must be derived from some source, in some manner, and there must be evidence other than verbal claims, defenses, vindications, and arguments both as to its source and to its being truth. In the second place, the test of truth is in its operations. If it is truth it promotes harmony and unity; if it produces conflict it is falsehood. There are no other criteria for truth and falsehood.

Now, the only evidence offered by the religions for the truth of what they call faith consists of verbal remonstrances and of denunciations of those who dare question it. But truth is never established by a battle of words, no matter how logical or consistent the words may be, nor is truth afraid of being questioned or examined. Furthermore, the religions differ among themselves as to what they call the truth of their respective faiths. In other words, the truth of the faith of the religions produces disharmony. On these two grounds we must conclude that what the religions call faith is a misrepresentation of its real nature.

What then is faith? What is the relationship between the truth of faith and the truth of science, and in what way do the religions misinterpret faith which forces them to claim that the truth of faith is either superior to or in conflict with the truth of science?

Let us turn first to the source and the evidence for the truth of science. A scientific truth is known as a law of nature. Its source is threefold: observation, experimentation, and verification. The scientific mind observes

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events and processes within direct or indirect sensory experience. On these observations it bases a plausible explanation of the events, in the form of a generalization, as to the law that is operative behind the phenomena observed. This generalization is called an hypothesis. The hypothesis is then put to test by experimentation, or controlled observation. If the experimental results indicate that the hypothesis explains the phenomena, namely, that the generalization brings all the observed events together, integrates them, then the hypothesis is accepted as a law. But should some new observation come to the fore that does not fit in with the accepted law, it reverts to a hypothesis, and calls for further experimentation. The experimental results must be repeated several times under the same conditions as a safeguard against the possibility of their being due to mere chance or to a misinterpretation of them by the experimenter. If the results are the same on repeated experimentation, the law is verified, since it can be used for the purpose of predicting what will happen under a given set of conditions, which means that the phenomena are under control. So the test of a scientific truth is that it can be depended upon; it can be used for the purpose of prediction and control; it can be relied upon to regulate the events upon which it is based. The events are the crucial factors in the truth. It comes from them, and it is tested by them.

The truth of faith differs from the truth of science only in the source of the data from which it is derived. In every other respect it is as the truth of science, in that as the truth of faith dawns upon the mind of the

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individual, it drives him to experiment with it and to verify it. The data of faith are private, personal experiences. These experiences give rise to an hypothesis, or a new conception of the meaning and value of the personal life around which the person's acts begin to be centered. The activities now become the expression or manifestation of the faith. The faith operates as the law of the individual's life. This happens because of the inner nature of the data from which the faith emanates. Since the data are inner experiences, the truth that emerges from them orders the inner life, gives it a new meaning, a new direction. As the faith is being born, the person is being reborn with it or in it. This is the experimental stage of the faith, for unless the faith affects the life, gives it a new orientation, there is no truth in the faith. And if there is truth in the faith it compels the person to keep on verifying it by repeated action in keeping with the faith. This is the story behind Paul's so-called conversion on the road to Damascus. That conversion was not sudden. It had been dawning upon him slowly and gradually until it reached fruition and came to the fore. Thenceforth his entire life became a testing out and a verifying of the faith. This is the background of his definition of faith: "Now faith is the assurance of (or, the giving substance to) things hoped for, the proving (or test) of things not seen." The truth is not seen in itself. It manifests itself only in action. The action is the evidence, the test, the giving substance to, the truth. The faith arises from experience, and manifests itself in experience. The old gives rise to the new, which transforms the old. Unless

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the transformation occurs, the new is a fancy, a deception, not a reality. And the testing and verifying of the faith are constant; for the new keeps on growing, renewing itself, calling for further testing and further verifying.

So the life of faith is the life of growth, of struggle, of striving and searching. It is not the life of attainment, but of attaining. It is the life of finding one's self by losing one's self. Faith is the word become flesh, because the word was born in the flesh and the flesh is reborn with it. The words of faith are not sounds to be repeated; they are the expression of experiences lived.

"The first thing with which God inspires the soul that he designs to touch truly," wrote Pascal, "is a knowledge and most extraordinary insight by which the soul considers things and herself in a manner wholly new. This new light gives her fear, and brings her a trouble that penetrates the repose which she found in the thing that made her delights. She can no longer relish with tranquility the things that charmed her. A continual scruple opposes her in this enjoyment, and this internal sight causes her to find no longer this accustomed sweetness among the things to which she abandoned herself with a full effusion of heart."

So we see that the truth of science and the truth of faith are neither opposed to each other, nor is one superior to the other. Science is a public truth, in that its sources and evidences are public. Faith is a private truth, since it comes from private sources; but the evidences for the presence of the truth are public: in the behavior

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of the faithbearing individual. The truth of science harmonizes external events by giving them a single meaning; that of faith unifies internal experiences by giving them a single purpose. Each is transforming in effect; each inspires a striving for greater truth.

Since there is no conflict between faith and science, there can be no opposition between faith and reason. As the truth of science first dawns upon the mind it calls for testing and verifying. The dawning of the truth is the work of a slow, subconscious process of mental brooding or incubating. The testing and verifying of the fruit of incubation is the fully conscious process of reasoning. One cannot exist without the other. The unconscious process awakes the conscious process. The unconscious gives the conscious something to do. To reason is to reason about something and towards something. The "about something" to reason is brought forth by the creative, unconscious process which calls upon the conscious process to transfer it from the world of the ideational into the world of the factual as a test of its realness. So reason neither makes truth nor destroys truth. When truth is born, reason undertakes its rearing to see the stuff it is made of. If it is a weakling, it is rejected. If it shows signs of strength, it is protected and nourished until it can stand on its own feet.

All this holds for the truth of faith. Reason can neither give faith nor take it away. It can only examine it and test it out. And whatever cannot stand the test of reason is not faith, is not a truth, but either a fancy, a delusion, or a deliberate falsification. There can be no evidence for truth or falsehood other than in its



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operations. And reason is the instrument for measuring these evidences as well as for their evaluation. It is the only safeguard against deception. It has been said that "the heart has its reasons of which the mind knows nought." That is absurd. The heart and the mind can neither be ignorant of each other nor be at odds with each other. But it is true that the reasons of the heart, by which is meant living, creative experience, cannot be induced or instilled by reasons of the mind, namely, by arguments, preachments, doctrines, or logical demonstrations. No one falls in love by being urged that he should fall in love, or by being promised a reward if he should, and a penalty if he fails to do so, or by being given a formula for it. But if he is in love, his mind knows what his heart knows. His heart and mind are one. Should either of them be in doubt the other shares the doubt. The faith of his heart is the reason of his mind. Even the mind of a lunatic is consistent with his lunacy. He is not one kind of lunatic in his heart and another in his mind. Pascal said that "It is the heart which experiences God, and not the reason. This, then, is faith: God felt by the heart, not by the reason." But if God is truly felt by the heart, he is also known by the mind. And if the mind does not know the God felt by the heart then the heart has no God, only a fancy or a word, or a convenience.

The faith of the religions, which is alleged to be superior to reason or opposed to it, and which divides the religions into warring camps, is not truth, but the formulas of creed and dogma. A truth is a quickening spirit, a creed is a dead hand. As we have seen in a pre-

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vious connection, living experience formulates itself, that is, shapes itself into an organic whole. But a formulation is not a formula. A formulation is a process, a working-out of experience. A formula is some ready-made concoction deliberately devised to accomplish some arbitrary end, and to be taken by prescription as a dose for something or other. The faith of the religions is such a formula. It is, as Socrates summarizes Euthyphro's conception of piety, "an art which gods and men have of doing business with each other." Those who accept a formula for faith do not have faith but a blind spot. The very inertness of the formula serves to give the impression of its finality as coming from a super-human source, and to afford an assurance of the promised benefits to be derived from its mere acceptance. "It is this deep impression of supernatural truths," writes Gibbon, "which has been so much celebrated under the name of faith; a state of mind described as the surest pledge of the Divine favour and of future felicity, and recommended as the first or perhaps the only merit of a Christian. According to the more rigid doctors, the moral virtues, which may be equally practiced by infidels, are destitute of any value or efficacy in the work of our justification."<sup>1</sup> The moral virtues are difficult to practice, while formulas are easy to accept, particularly when big profits are promised on such small investments. But faith is not a believing of something easy and debilitating. It is a doing of something that is difficult but vitalizing. It is a death and a rebirth; and not the taking of a spiritual bath. It is not the

<sup>1</sup>*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The Modern Library, Vol. I, p. 410.

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holding of something in the mind as a consolation; but the living of something as a compulsion. Faith is not bestowed; it bestows. It is not implanted; it implants. It is not given; it gives; and it is not taken; but it takes. The person does not possess the faith, to use for his ends; the faith takes possession of the person and uses him for its ends. It is not given and accepted; but it gives and accepts only that which it gives.

So faith is not a consoling or convenient belief in some proposition. A belief is something one talks about, something one professes on certain occasions for a certain purpose. Faith is what one lives on all occasions and for all purposes. When a faith changes, a life changes. When a belief changes, an affiliation changes and talk changes. It is like changing one position for another, modifying the talk but not the person who does the talking. Faith is a conviction that grows out of one's very being, and transforms that being. A belief is a point of view held in the interest of some fancied or real advantage or favor to be obtained. There is greediness in belief; it is self-seeking. But there is a selflessness in faith, a self-surrender, a self-searching and a self-giving. He who has faith in God lives God, for God lives in him. He who believes in God uses God for his own convenience, glorification, or profit. Faith is an inner call for a new way of living. Belief is an outer suggestion for a new way of viewing old ways of doing. The man who has faith that honesty is the best policy knows it from practice and demonstrates it in practice. The man who proclaims a belief that honesty is the best policy does so either because he has

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found that it pays, or in the hope that his proclaiming the sentiment will pay. Ask some professing Christian or self-styled liberal Jew about the teachings of Jesus and he will wax enthusiastic in their praise. But inquire about the practice of the teachings he praises so highly and you will be told that of course the teachings must be interpreted so and so; that they are ideals not meant for daily application in a hard and harsh world of struggle; or that they are quite unsuited to modern conditions. Faith never compromises nor does it know exceptions. But belief is a compromise, a business arrangement, with an eye to the advantages to be obtained from it by him who hands it out and by him who accepts it. It is a way, in the religions, that men have of doing business with each other through what they conveniently call God.

With the faith of the religions reason is in conflict; for reason cannot accept or acquiesce. Its nature is to delve and examine that which would proclaim itself as truth. Those who would oppose faith to reason do so because their conception of faith or religion is irrational, and reason destroys irrationality. Their logic is this: "What we want to believe, to be true, is contrary to reason. But what we want to believe and hold to be true cannot possibly be false, therefore it must be faith and opposed to reason." Thus faith becomes the justification and vindication for any fancy or absurdity any one wishes to harbor. Those on the other hand who hold that dogma is in keeping with reason but superior to it, are talking not of reason but of rationalization. Thought can operate either as examination or as justification. As

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examination it is reason; as justification it is rationalization. And when that which cannot stand the light of reason is nevertheless a convenience to hold on to, the light of reason is shut out by the darkness of rationalization. Dogma cannot stand the light of reason; so it is justified by rationalization as being superior to reason. But if it is true that by their fruits ye shall know them, then dogma condemns itself out of its own mouth. It has always been the makers and adherents of creed and dogma who have denounced and persecuted not only those of genuine faith but also those who have refused to subscribe to one or another brand of doctrine. If then dogma is faith, and faith is truth, and the truth of faith is religion, then the adherents of dogma as faith and faith as religion must admit that religion is an evil; for evil is that which causes disruption, and disruption has been the principal fruit of the tree of the religion of the religions. But these fruits only indicate that the religion of the religions is a corruption of religion, simply because the faith of the religions is a corruption of faith.

## *Chapter Two*

### **THE ROLE OF GOD IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE**

In the previous chapter it was pointed out that the nature of religion cannot be ascertained from a study of the religions since these are concerned with propaganda in the interest of certain established beliefs and practices and not with a disinterested search for the truth of religion. How then can we proceed? The answer is that we must proceed scientifically, namely, by drawing upon data about which there can be no question. Such data are available to us along two lines: (1) That wherever we find religion in any form, there we also find some conception of a superior being or god who stands in some relationship to man; (2) that the conception of the nature of this being changes radically, although gradually, in the course of the ages. From this we must conclude, (1) that whatever religion is, is to be found in an examination of the nature of this superior being; (2) that the changes throughout the ages in the nature of this superior being indicate that he is a creation of man's mind, which, in turn, indicates that this being must represent something in the evolution of man's conception of himself as a human personality. The problem concerning the nature of the religious experience and its role in human life reduces itself, therefore, to the question as to what the god-experience is an

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experience of; what need of man is personified or expressed in God.

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE GOD-EXPERIENCE

The evolution of the god-concept has advanced along five lines: (1) from a multiplicity of gods, to several gods, to one god; (2) from inferior gods, to superior gods, to a supreme god; (3) from gods of nature to gods of men, and from gods of men in groups or tribes to a god of the individual; (4) from a god with no concern with man, to a god in contact with man, but distant from him, to a god indwelling in man and non-existent apart from man; (5) from a god with no ethical import, to a god with high ethical concerns, to a god who exists as a spiritual force. These five directions of the evolution have been parallel, for as the multiplicity of gods gives way to one god, the contact of the god with man becomes closer, and his nature increases in ethical content; until, at the final stage, he is a purely spiritual presence indwelling in the individual. Furthermore, accompanying this evolution there are changes (1) in the nature of the god, his appearance, purposes, interests, and intentions; (2) in the beliefs, practices and attitudes he demands of man for himself; (3) in what he believes about man, his nature, his purpose, and his welfare; (4) in the way he expects or demands that men treat each other.

The first gods we encounter are spirits that have their abode in natural phenomena over which they preside.

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They have no special form, appearance, objectives, or intentions. They are blind in their operations. They are consciousnessless and conscientiousless. They have no voice, no awareness, no will or desire. They issue no instructions to man directly or indirectly, make no demands of him, give him no guidance in his relationship to them or to his fellow men. They show no evidence of any concern with themselves or with men. They have no beliefs about themselves or about the world, or about human beings. They do not ask man to believe this or that, to act thus or so; they neither approve or disapprove, reward nor punish, enjoin nor prohibit. Ethically they are thus meaningless. Since they show no will, no desire, no purpose towards man, man can neither pray to them nor worship them. He cannot know good from evil, sin from virtue. But he does know that which harms him and that which benefits him. These spirits of natural forces affect his welfare. He encounters them in all his activities. At times they help him, at other times they harm him. He cannot escape them. They are always about and around him. His life is inseparable from them. Since, then, he cannot live without them, he must take them into account, learn how to deal with them, how to propitiate those that can be an aid to him, how to placate them when they are ill disposed towards him, and how to outwit those that are antagonistic to him.

The next gods we encounter are gods of men rather than of natural forces, and appear in human form. They are anthropomorphic gods, gods possessing human traits, but operating in a superhuman manner.



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When we first encounter an anthropomorphic god he is a war-lord, a military leader, a despotic ruler over his soldiers and subjects. We find him in all his glory and majesty as the Yahweh of the Old Testament. He is aloof and distant from man, but he is man-like in all his traits, and occasionally even descends to direct contact with man. He visits Abraham, wrestles with Jacob, talks to Moses, goes to meet Balaam, strolls in a garden in the cool of the evening, walks with Noah and Enoch, and is persuaded by Abraham to spare Sodom and Gomorrah. Not only is he man-like in appearance, but man-like in nature, as becomes a war-lord and despot. He is haughty, proud, intolerant, demanding, vain-glorious, envious, jealous, ambitious, willful, implacable, obstinate, vengeful, insatiable for glory, power and possessions. Other gods he will not tolerate; and the only use he has for his own soldiers and subjects is as means for his own glorification. He is the general of an army, and he is out for conquest. He is cruel, vicious, and deceptive in his dealings with the armies of other gods. He is "Yahweh Sabaoth," Yahweh of the armies. He "goes forth with his hosts." "Yahweh is a man of war," says Moses. "He teaches my hands to war," cries David, "so that mine arms do bend a bow of brass." He breaks his enemies and dashes them to pieces like a potter's vessel. He teaches His generals how to capture cities and lures the embattled foe to destruction. But in return for all this he asks payment, often nothing less than every captured man, woman, child, and precious thing. When the King of Arad, the Canaanite, came and fought against Israel, and took some of them cap-

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tive, Israel vowed a vow unto Yahweh, and said, "If thou wilt deliver this people into my hands, I will put their cities to the herem," that is, "I will sacrifice them utterly, and without exception."

He is not much kinder to his own people. He demands offerings and sacrifices as tests of their loyalty or to appease his anger. So Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh in Gilgal as a sacrificial act. Abraham offered up Isaac; the first-born was to be given for transgression, and the first of a man's body for the sin of his soul. He demands a share of all his people's possessions, the first-born of men and cattle, and above all the savor of blood. He demands absolute obedience to his decrees, and he is merciless in punishing transgressions. The sin of the fathers he visits upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, and he vindicates his glory and power by humiliating his people before other nations. "And the generations to come, and the foreigner that shall come from a far land shall say, when they see the plagues of Judah, and the sickness wherewith Yahweh hath made it sick, 'Wherefore hath Yahweh done this unto the land? What meaneth the heat of his great anger?' Then men shall say, 'Because they foresook the covenant of Yahweh, the god of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, and went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them; therefore the anger of Yahweh was kindled against this land, and Yahweh rooted them out of their land in anger, and in

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wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land.' ”

He prescribes certain beliefs about himself that his subjects must accept on his word, and which they can doubt only at the cost of severest reprisals. He gives minutest directions how he is to be served, honored, and revered. The beliefs and practices are all for his personal glorification. The laws he prescribes for his subjects are not intended for their welfare, but as a test of their loyalty to him, of his absolute command and control over them. He has no responsibility to his people, but his people owe him all their allegiance. If he is merciful it is a grand gesture to show his majesty, that men might honor him the more, and shower upon him more praise, presents, petitions, and penance. His subjects can never humiliate themselves sufficiently before him. They are as dust under his feet, unworthy of him; but he tolerates them, so they can praise him and worship him. If his army of subjects fails in an enterprise it is never his fault. He cannot fail. The failure is due to their disobedience. The enemy did not defeat him; rather he set the enemy on his people to show them his displeasure. The only glory of men is to glorify him; their only good is to obey him; their only evil is to neglect him. “If thou shalt hearken diligently to his voice,” declares the Moses of Deuteronomy, “Yahweh thy god will set thee high above all the nations of the earth, and shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee. They shall come against thee one way and shall flee before thee seven ways.” He strikes hard bargains, is not beyond bribery, insists

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on all credit but will take no blame, and will resort to any device to save his face. He permits evil to exist, not because he is powerless, but in order to spy upon his subjects to test their obedience and loyalty, to enjoy his wrath and vengeance, or to display his patience, mercy and grace. He plays favoritism, grants privileges, but recognizes no obligations. Everything exists through him and for him. All good comes from him, but all evil comes from men. To him belongs all credit, but no blame can rest on him.

He calls for an army of underlings to cater to his needs and whims, who will guard him from too intimate contact with the rebel who might contaminate him. His retinue must be recognized by the underlings as entitled to special distinctions and privileges, for it is through them that proper respect is paid to the lord and master whose representatives and intermediaries they are. He must have costly, resplendent domiciles, elaborate ceremonials in his honor, special ways of approaching and addressing him, special days of petitioning him. He is exclusive, aristocratic, irreproachable and unapproachable, secretive, mysterious, all-knowing, and all-powerful.

At a later stage in the evolution of the god-idea, god, the war-lord and despot, is transformed into god the leader and guide with fatherly solicitude for men. He loses his militaristic sternness, his despotic egotism, his appetite for glory and power, his aristocratic exclusiveness and distance, and descends from his throne to come closer to man. Instead of issuing orders, he gives instructions. Instead of dictating, he directs and guides.

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He does not demand; he advises, admonishes, corrects. His interest now is not so much in the promotion of his glory as in advancing the welfare of human beings. Men are his charges, rather than his subjects. Instead of issuing edicts as to how men are to conduct themselves towards him, his interest is in teaching them how they are to act towards each other. He is now an ethical god, concerned with virtue. Ceremonies and sacrifices no longer concern him, but the way men treat each other, how they conduct their affairs, what their purposes and motives are. He does not ask for presents, prayers, adoration, praise, but for justice and righteousness. "To what purpose is the multitude of your oblations unto me?" says the god of Isaiah. "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; . . . Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

All the paraphernalia of regal splendour, ceremonial, exclusiveness and glorification are here replaced by a call for a way of life in accordance with principles of humanitarianism. Jehovah is still the exclusive property of Israel, and Israel remains His exclusive people. But Jehovah's interest and attitude towards His people has changed radically. His preoccupation with Himself has given way to a solicitude for Israel. Ethical instruction supplants military orders. Israel is to realize that obedience to Jehovah is not so much for the good of Jehovah as for the advancement of the welfare of Israel.

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Israel is no longer an army of soldiers of value only in promoting the purposes of an ambitious potentate out to conquer the world for his personal glory. Israel is a social community whose welfare is dependent upon peace and harmony in its own midst through the practice of social justice. There is to be no oppression of the weak and helpless. The hungry are to be fed, the naked clothed, the unfortunate pitied and consoled, the stranger welcomed, and all Israel is to live in an atmosphere of goodwill and comradeship. As such, Israel will present a solid front among the peoples and survive.

The final stage in the evolution of the god-idea we find in the utterances of a small number of individuals who lived at various times and in a variety of climes, as for instance, in Jesus of Nazareth, in the writers of some of the Psalms, in some of the Egyptian social prophets, and in most of the mystics of the ages. In all these there is one common conception of God as permeating and indwelling in all creation. God is the one, the final, the absolute, of which the multifarious, the transitory and the temporary are the expressions or manifestations. God is the Being of the world, that which is changeless, indestructible, the whole, complete, perfect and immortal, the truth and finally existent, who manifests himself through all phenomena. So everything in the world is perfect because it is a reflection of perfection; good, because an expression of goodness; true, because a projection of truth; beautiful, because a manifestation of beauty; holy, because a bodying-forth of holiness. The only reality in the world is therefore God, who is wholeness, completeness, perfection; and just be-

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cause he is wholeness, completeness, and perfection he is also goodness, truth, and beauty. Imperfection, incompleteness, evil, falsehood, and ugliness are not realities. They exist as evil only for him who does not see them in the light of the source from which they emanate. They are due to the shadow being mistaken for the substance.

Wherever we encounter this conception of God in religious literature, we also find a passionate expression of a longing for a union of the many with the one, the imperfect with the perfect, the incomplete with the complete. There is a cry of self-insufficiency, of a yearning to attain, to come into fullness and wholeness. All the injunctions Jesus has for his followers have this for their basic note. The inner must not be mistaken for the outer; it is the inner spirit that counts, not the outer act. It is the seeking that matters, not the finding; the giving, not the taking. One must love the whole, all of mankind, not only the parts; for only by loving the whole can one worship the whole, the Father who is in Heaven, who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. One is to pray innerly, silently; for God is inner, within, and all recompense is inner, within. God cannot forgive one's trespasses when one harbors evil against another; for one cannot be whole with God when separated from other men. If one judges, he is also judged; for the parts of a whole are interdependent, and what is done to one is done to all. Nor can one be whole by serving two masters, God and mammon. Nor can one lay up treasures on earth and also in heaven;

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for if one's heart is on the parts, it is away from the whole. The eye must be on the whole, then all the parts will be full of light. If the eye is on the parts, the whole is in darkness, which is evil. Nor can one be anxious for the parts without doing evil to the whole; for the welfare of the parts comes from the wholeness, the wholesomeness of the whole. The whole feeds the parts so the parts find their well-being in the whole. Nor can the whole be attained by mere talk, but by action, by doing the will of the Father which is in Heaven. All lies in struggling and striving for perfection, for God, for being.

Ask, and it shall be given you;  
Seek, and ye shall find;  
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you;  
For everyone that asketh receiveth,  
And he that seeketh findeth,  
And to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

So God, in the final stage, becomes the god of love; and all his traits are now those of the lover in his attitude to the beloved. The god of a particular people becomes the god of a particular person. An ethical and moral god becomes a spiritual god. From dwelling first apart from his people, then amidst his people, he gets to be indwelling in man. He becomes the lover, for whom the significant value is the individual personality, not the group. God the lover then transcends all boundaries that divide men into nations, races, opposing groups. Recognizing only the individual, and indwelling in the individual, he is intimate and universal. As



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lover he neither demands nor instructs, but gives himself freely and eagerly. He loses all vestiges of selfishness, envy, or jealousy. His whole interest is to maintain the integrity and inviolability of the beloved. The beloved is to be kept pure and holy, not to be trespassed upon. The lover is not concerned with any of the social virtues such as justice, mercy, and pity. There is no need for these in love, for love transcends them. Nor is there room for good and evil, vice and virtue, in love. It is all goodness and all virtue. Nor does love calculate benefits and advantages to be derived from the relationship. It lives for, in, and by love. It is intrinsic, inherent. There is inevitably an element of greediness and selfishness in the social virtues. They are means towards ends. One can obtain advantages from them. They pay in social approval, social position, or even in money. They also lend themselves to self-congratulation. And pretense and hypocrisy are not beyond them. They can become mere lip-service. But not so with love. Love is in action, not in talk. It is for the beloved, not for oneself. One has his being in the beloved. It brings him out of himself. It is a tremendous stimulus for struggling to be worthy of the beloved. The lover can never do enough for the beloved. All selfish interests and purposes disappear before it. Love is all-inclusive of truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness, and all-exclusive of falsehood, evil, the ugly, and the profane. Where love is, all virtue is. Where love is not, all virtue is pale, cold, distant. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of

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prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh no account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

God as guide, teacher, leader, much as he is an advance upon the war-lord, yet falls short of love. Although he is long-suffering and kind, he is envious, vain, puffed up, seeks his own, is provoked, takes account of evil. He still judges, rewards, punishes, is suspicious, goes off in a huff, sulks, accepts, and even expects flattery, and is not beyond granting favors for a consideration. God the lover is purged of all human frailties and failings, and his only demand of man is that man be worthy of his manhood in God.

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What does the evolution we have been tracing signify? If god is man's creation, as he obviously is, or even if we admit that this evolution only means man's getting to know god more intimately, we can ask, in the first case, "Of what is god a creation? Of what, in man's mind, is he an image in which man reflects himself?"

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Or we can ask, in the second case, "Why does man want to know god better and closer? What need drives him on to seek god?" Briefly, the question is: What is the psychology of the god-experience?

We shall be in a better position to deal with this question if we bring together the crucial points in the evolution we have traced.

We find, in surveying this evolution, that it has proceeded mainly along two lines, namely, ethical and numerical. Ethically the progress has been from gods who are devoid of any ethical implication to a god whose substance and existence is a spiritual being or presence. Ethically god keeps coming closer to man, from having no concern with man, from being out in the void, to being one with man, indwelling in him and non-existent without him; or, if one prefers, from man standing off from god, to man feeling empty, meaningless, and futile without god. This means that at first the god is non-human in the sense that he has no human traits whatever. The next god is human, but in an inhuman fashion. He possesses human traits; he is a person; but he keeps his distance from man. He is "offish"; he looks down upon man, sends orders to him through a hierarchy of intermediaries, but man is unworthy of intimacy with him. Man can approach him only indirectly, distantly, in sacrifices, petitions, praises, through a medium acceptable to the god and appointed by him. However, even at this stage, the inhumanity undergoes a change in degree, for the laws of the god as war-lord over man are not the laws of the god as leader and teacher of man. As war-lord, he is anything but friendly to man.

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All his laws and edicts concern the attitude of man to himself. Man is to fear him, obey him, submit to him, humble himself before him, have no thought, no desire, other than the glorification and adoration of the god. He is jealous, envious, vengeful, and wrathful, and he metes out the severest punishments for infraction of his laws, but offers no rewards for obedience. This god has no obligation to man, while all of man's obligations are to him. As leader and teacher, the nature of the god is softened. He becomes more humane. His greediness and selfishness are reduced. He leans closer to man. He directs and instructs him for his own good. His laws are of the nature of ethical teachings. He asks man to consider his own welfare. He is kindly, solicitous, fatherly. His demands are for man, not for himself. He stresses man's duty to man, what man owes to himself, rather than man's obligations to him. His wrath is kindled only by man's inhumanity to man, and the punishments he visits upon him are for his own good, to turn him from evil ways to the path of righteousness and justice. He is to be appeased by man's penitence, not by his presents. The needs of men are the needs of god; their sorrows are his sorrows; their joys are his joys; their welfare is his welfare.

In the final stage, god transcends the ordinary human traits as a person. He loses all distance from man. He becomes more than a counsellor. He becomes an indwelling presence, unified with man, the substance of man's being. He is a spiritual force, an inner driving power in man for struggling and striving to achieve. He is a supreme goal, beckoning man on to attain fullness and

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completeness. God becomes an urgent call to man, an irresistible challenge to keep rising out of himself by reaching into himself. The god of love does not issue commands, does not point out pathways to be followed to goals of personal gain. He is an insistent and persistent inner voice, calling, challenging, urging man to ask, knock, and seek at the door of his own being where he will receive an answer that remains an everlasting question, and where he will find what is an everlasting seeking.

So we proceed in this evolution from god as haughty towards man, to god as kindly to man, to god as lover of man. We have first a god whose traits are pride and haughtiness, a god who demands and who gives only vengeance when he does not receive what he demands; then a god who is justice, mercy, righteousness, who demands only that of man which man should demand of himself; and finally, a god whose commands and demands are those of love to struggle for fullness and wholeness in the surrender to the beloved. In his attitude towards god, man proceeds from fear of that which has power to hurt him and calls for propitiation and pacification; to respect for that which helps him in the promotion of his own welfare; to awe and reverence for that which embraces and encompasses all, and a longing for union with this awesome and revering presence. Man first fears god because he is in god's hands as a toy and plaything, and he worships him in the trembling of fear by sacrificing to him; next he respects god because god is his leader in righteousness, a help in the hour of trouble, and a refuge in time of danger, and he worships

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him in song and praise; next he loves and longs for god and worships him in the silence of adoration. First god possesses man, he is god's property to do with as god pleases; then god cooperates with man, helps him to get along, to choose between good and evil; finally god puts himself in the possession of man, man becomes possessed of god so that he might become godly.

Parallel with this evolution from a strange god to an indwelling god, there is an evolution from many gods to a one and only god, or, as we know it technically, from polytheism to monotheism. The parallelism is inevitable. The first gods are as numerous as the phenomena of nature. As the gods become persons, either as war-lords or ethical and moral teachers, there is a god for each regiment and each social or ethical group. The god of the Old Testament is such a god; he is the god of Israel, first as the war-lord of the Law, then as the lord of justice and righteousness of the Prophets. He is not a monotheistic god, or a god of all peoples. He is a monolatrous god, the possession of one people who seeks to subdue other peoples, so that he might become the over-lord, the lord of lords, the god of gods. Jehovah is the god of Israel, and Israel is the people of Jehovah. Jehovah has power over the nations of the world, for he is the all-powerful, but he has no nation other than Israel. Ultimately he will conquer the other nations for his own, but they will be subservient to his own Israel. Israel is Jehovah's instrument through whom he will establish himself as the god of all nations. The other nations will recognize him as their sovereign through conquest, but Israel will remain his people,

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whom he has chosen for his beloved and as the instrument of his purposes. When the other nations recognize the god of Israel they will have the true god, but he will remain Israel's god in whom all nations are to be blessed. Jehovah will not judge all peoples equally with Israël even when all nations recognize him. Israel is to remain his peculiar people for eternity.

It is only when god becomes the god of love, the indwelling, all-pervading presence, that he becomes, and can become, a universal god, monotheistic. The relationship of individual to individual transcends all nationalistic boundaries, for one individual can know another individual only irrespective of the nationalistic label that the individual may carry. So the consciousness of individuality brings all individuals together, makes individuality the universal value. Hence, it is only as god becomes the god of the individual, which he must become as an indwelling presence, that he also becomes universalized; as being the god, the indwelling presence of all individuals, as equally present and operating in all men. As an actually felt inner presence, god becomes one in whom all human beings become one. So long as god remains outside of men, men remain outside of each other; or the people of one god are opposed to the people of another god, each god seeking to establish himself as the over-lord over other gods. As god comes into man, men come into each other, as they recognize the one common indwelling presence in each man. When men feel their oneness as god becomes the one in all, they cannot impose on each other, for god as one cannot impose on himself. God, as many gods, can war on

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himself, since he is a split personality, and each personality seeks to gain the upper hand over the other personalities. In the harmonized or integrated personality, in the one god, all personalities are on an equal footing, and there can be no strife between them, since there is no higher and lower, superior and inferior. All are highest and supreme.

We are now in a position to see the human significance of this evolution; to answer the question as to what man seeks and finds in god; what the god-experience is an experience of. God is the objectification or personification of man's changing conception of himself; of what and who he is; of where he lives and has his being; and where to seek his true welfare. In the evolution of god we find man's progressive conception of himself as a value; from the physical, to the ethical and moral, to the spiritual. It is man's inner journey in the discovery of himself. In the physical gods he is a physical being; he is hungry, thirsty, in need of shelter and protection from physical phenomena in his environment. His welfare depends upon these forces, so he has to do something to adjust himself to them, to control them. Man's first problem was with nature; with himself as a physical animal calling for physical sustenance. His physical sustenance depended on physical phenomena, so he was one with external nature, saw himself in nature where his existence lay. He lived in nature, outside of himself, because whatever was within him depended upon that which was outside for its subsistence. Since at this stage man is but an animal seeking to survive, his gods are as himself, physical gods operating for or



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against him. The gods are good or evil, in accordance with their effect upon him. If they promote his well-being they are good; if they work against him they are evil. Of the good he wants more, so he has ways for propitiating the good spirits to obtain increased favors. The evil he must ward off, so he has ways of frightening, deceiving, or hiding himself from evil spirits. And the spirits of good and evil are as numerous as are the natural forces that affect him.

As man becomes conscious of himself as a human being, as a social being, in the course of mental evolution, a new problem of survival presents itself to him, namely, his welfare as dependent upon his relationship to other human beings in intimate association with him. His wants are their wants, and his needs are their needs. So a communal or group consciousness arises where each man sees himself as partaking in a common need, and therefore as having kinship with others. But the kinship is only with those in intimate touch with each other, with the familiar or family. The individual at this stage knows himself only as a member of his group, and only members of his own group are of his own kind. Members of another group are of another kind, in that they are unfamiliar, distant, and unknown. Since the individual is in the group, exists only as the group and knows himself only as the group, his welfare is the group welfare. Welfare is a matter of group solidarity, as protection against other groups. So we have groups of individuals acting as units, each against all the others, the welfare of each being conceived as depending upon the suppression of the others. And the gods of this

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stage in mental evolution are the protectors of the tribal solidarity, sending out military orders for the soldiers to maintain a solid front. This group-oneness is personified in god the war-lord, for war is the occupation of the embattled army groups. The war-lord recognizes the individual only as he contributes to the strength of the regiment, and for this he must be one with the regiment. All must be subject to the same law, obedience to the General, for the safety of the regiment and for its strength in battle.

In a later stage there is a change in the conception as to the source of group solidarity, namely, social justice; so god the war-lord is displaced by god the leader and teacher. This stage represents the emergence of a consciousness of individuality within the group, or the consciousness of difference between individual members of the tribe. Consciousness of individuality in its first flush means conflict between individual and individual of the group, each individual seeking self-assertiveness at the expense of others. So individuality is initially a menace to group safety; for it sets man against man, weakening the group and making it a prey to enemy groups. The group solidarity must be therefore maintained, but it cannot be enforced through regimentation. The individual will not submit to it. But he might submit to a personal appeal for fairness and square dealing, for justice and righteousness; and the gods, still tribal deities, become the advocates of ethical ideas, the embodiments of justice, righteousness, pity, and other social virtues. These virtues are utilities. They have no value in themselves. Their value is derived from their con-

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sequences, that they result in group welfare in which the individual participates. If Israel disobeys, it will be destroyed by other tribes; if it obeys, it will attain glory in the conquest of its enemies. Each tribe has its ethical god who is to be glorified over the other gods by the strength of ethical solidarity. Man's welfare, which is group welfare, is now dependent upon obedience to a god of righteousness.

The final stage in the evolution we are tracing is the dawning of the consciousness of inner selfhood in which there occurs the recognition of a basic underlying unity in the surface differences of human beings. As the differences begin to be felt as only surface manifestations of an underlying unity, the unity is seen as being the true reality and the differences as its shadow. As this consciousness comes to the fore and increases in vividness and intensity, all boundary lines separating men are dispelled and men emerge as mankind. Tribal gods are dissolved and merge into one universal god, and all men into one family in god. There is no longer need for justice and righteousness, since selfhood does not attempt to establish itself over other selves but seeks fulfillment in a self of selves or the self of all selves. This supreme selfhood is conceived, expressed or personified as god whose characteristic is love. So god becomes indwelling in man as the self is indwelling in the selves, constituting their substance and being. As god comes to indwell in man, man seeks to indwell in god; for as love comes to man, man seeks to become love.

God, we thus find, is man's image of himself as a human being in the course of the evolution of human

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consciousness. The conception of god at any one of these stages of evolution is an expression of man's conception at that stage of life's ultimate value. The evolution proceeds (1) in values: from physical, to ethical, to moral, to spiritual; (2) in man's conception of himself as a human being: from no human consciousness, to tribal human consciousness, to social human consciousness, to universal human consciousness; (3) and in god concepts: from spirits of nature, to gods of military tribes, to gods of socio-ethical groups, to a god of the individual. God comes closer to man as man comes closer to himself. His first conception of that self is as a physical being; next as a soldier in an army; then as an individual distinct from other individuals to whose advantage it is to cooperate with his own kind; finally, as a self among other selves, all of whom participate in one substance of selfhood. Man's journey in knowledge of himself has been from outer to inner; from surface to depth; from multiplicity and conflict to unity and harmony; from physical to spiritual; from incomplete to complete. At each stage he is engaged in a striving for complete realization of the particular conception of himself at that stage. And god is the embodiment, the personification, of that fullness and fulfillment; the complete realization of that towards which man is striving. As man sought for increased satisfaction of physical needs, he strove to attract or ward off the physical forces that favored or harmed him. As he sought for increased power and strength over others, he strove to ingratiate himself with a supreme leader upon whom this power and strength depended. As he sought for the substance

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of his being, he strove for union with the one substance of all being.

What now, after this long journey into the meaning of god in human experience, is religion, or the religious consciousness? It is man's feeling of dependence for his welfare, his well-being, on a power other than himself. This power he can conceive only in terms of himself; yet it must be superior to himself. So we find that as man's conception of himself changes, the power from which comes his help changes. But the nature of the power remains his nature; only magnified, or idealized. The power of the spirit-gods is above the power of man; the might of the war-lord is the supreme might of the army; the justice and righteousness of the god of the socio-ethical group is full justice and righteousness; the self of the god of the self is the substance of selfhood. All along, god is that which man longs for, wishes to be, strives to become; in which he can attain completeness of himself and without which he feels weak and helpless. God is always the whole of which man is the part; the perfect of what man is the imperfect; the being of which man is the becoming; the fulfillment of which man is the fulfilling. In the midst of the transitory, god is the permanent; in the midst of the fluctuating, he is the constant; in the midst of the finite, he is the infinite; in the midst of diversity and chaos, he is unity and harmony. There is no safety or rest in the incomplete, the unwholesome, the transitory, the confusing. Only in completeness, wholeness, is there peace and security. So religion is man's search for security in that which is security; for peace in that which is peace. Re-

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ligion, at any stage of its evolution, is never an attainment, but an attaining; never an accomplishment, but an accomplishing; never a grasping, but a reaching.

### III

#### RELIGION IN ITS SOCIAL OPERATION

From this analysis of the nature of the religious experience, we can make an evaluation of several practical matters in religion; namely, (1) its social implications and significance; (2) the relation of the religions to religion; (3) whether man is naturally religious; (4) and finally, the difference between morality and religion.

1. Religion is a felt relationship of man to a higher power than himself, objectified as god, the nature of the objectification being determined by man's conception of himself at a certain period in his mental evolution. At the highest point in the evolution the relationship is felt to be that between an individual being and a universal, all inclusive, all embracing being, or between an individual self and a universal self. The religious experience at this point is the reaching-out of the individual self to the universal self. Since the universal self is the embodiment of all selves, since it is the self of selves, the reaching out of the individual self to the universal self is also a reaching out of every individual self to every other individual self. To put this more psychologically, as the individual is becoming increasingly conscious of his own selfhood, as he is groping for the discovery of himself, he is also becoming increasingly conscious of the selfhood of others, with the result that all selves be-

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come one self; or, which amounts to the same thing, one's self becomes the self of others and the self of others becomes one's own self. The differences are then seen to be the manifold operations of the one basic unity, the variety of ways in which the fundamental harmony is manifesting itself. The selfhood of one person is not the selfhood of another, yet in selfhood all are one, in that the substance, the being, of one is also the substance and being of the others. God is this selfhood of selfhoods, the likeness in the differences, of which the differences are the manifold expression. He contains all the unique selves, as the whole contains a number of distinctive parts. So likeness and difference are inseparable, as the whole and its parts are inseparable, as god and man are inseparable. Their welfare is mutual. The whole cannot be wholesome, complete, perfect, unless the parts are wholesome, complete, perfect. When the part is not true to itself the whole is disrupted, broken up, unwholesome.

In its social bearing, then, religion is the awareness of the uniqueness and sanctity of the human personality as the supreme value on earth. As a reflection of god the human personality is godlike, partaking of the divine nature; it is complete as a reflection of completeness; perfect as a reflection of perfection; whole as a reflection of wholeness; infinite as a reflection of infinity; holy as a reflection of holiness. To love god is to love man, and to love man is to love god; for god is in man, and man is in god. "Let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is begotten of

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God, and knows God. He that loves not, loves not God; for God is love." These words, as expressions of vital, living experience, sum up the social gospel of the religion resulting from the private experience of god as an infinite, supreme, all-pervading and ever-present presence.

2. From the standpoint of religion as we have found it in its highest form, all the religions belong to the tribal and socio-ethical stages of the evolution of the religious consciousness. This is obvious from what the religions stress as constituting the religious life. All of them call for the acceptance of an objective god, for certain beliefs about him, for certain practices on his behalf, and for intermediaries between god and man who claim to know and communicate his will. The only difference between them is in the sort of objective god they advocate, and hence what beliefs and practices about him they call for, and what the intermediaries hold to be their function. They resemble each other only in that each of them contains some elements of the others, and that religion in its true form is absent from all of them. The sacramental religions, with their war-lord god, have much in them of the magic of the spirit-gods and something of ethical import. Their stress, however, is on a solid front of the embattled army. They call for absolute submission to law which they pronounce as final and infallible, to question which is heresy and blasphemy. All those who are not of them are to be looked upon with suspicion as enemies, to be watched and attacked with every available weapon, at the least sign of danger. Those on the inside are to be kept in line and severely disciplined if they show any inclination to stray from



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the fold, and to be dismissed if they refuse to submit. The army of the embattled Lord must not be endangered by revolt in the ranks or by delinquency in the performance of set orders and duties. Whatever reward the soldier is to receive is not obtained by his deserts, but as a gift from the over-lord as a sign of his graciousness. But the punishment is to be swift, severe, and enduring for insubordination. If the delinquent is sufficiently penitent he may be reinstated on submitting to harsh discipline, but he remains under the cloud of suspicion.

Those religions that march under the banner of the socio-ethical god are less rigid in demanding adherence to any set rules and regulations, and welcome any one into their ranks who expresses a desire for a righteous and virtuous life. With this stress on an upright life, they hold on to many of the practices of the sacramental religions, and some even to a modicum of magic. They insist on a belief in an objective god who rewards and punishes, and look upon virtue as a profitable investment and sin as poor business.

The so-called liberal and reform religions, whether Christian or Jewish, are unsuccessful attempts to break away from the religions in the direction of religion. Their failure is two-fold. In the first place, they reduce religion to ethics, which it is not; and secondly, since they hold on to organization, institutionalism, they engage in many practices typical of the religions. They do not call on their followers to accept any of the beliefs or engage in any practices typical of the religions; yet, in their worship, their observances of special days, they

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perpetuate what they claim to have repudiated. They have neither religion, which does not lend itself to any form of organization, nor a religion, which calls for adherence to some beliefs and practices, nor ethics, in which there is no need for the paraphernalia of what passes for religious worship. Both the reform rabbi and the liberal minister pay their homage to a god in the course of their service whose existence they deny either directly or by implication in their sermons. The liberal religions are thus neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. As religion, in whatever sense of the term, they only keep up appearances. Their worst sin is that they confuse, and in a degree, deceive, their already confused and deceived adherents. Their greatest virtue is that they neither dogmatize nor proselytize. They let human beings alone.

3. The religions, by holding on to an objective god, by defining religion as a body of beliefs about him, and engaging in certain practices called for by him, make of religion that which is within the reach of all. All can accept certain beliefs, and all can engage in certain practices, therefore all can be religious, or have religion. Therefore, man is naturally religious. The logic of the situation is inevitable, and all the characteristic features of the religions arise from it. If there is an objective god he must possess certain objective traits, as all objects do. And since he has a certain relationship to man, or he would be quite a useless god, man must have ways of dealing with him, of carrying on transactions with him. There must be certain beliefs about him, the kind of god he is, and what he expects or demands of man, and certain practices in keeping with the beliefs. This

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makes necessary an organization, an institution, that is the custodian of those beliefs and practices, and specialists to promulgate them and indoctrinate them. But since there is no agreement as to what the nature of this god is, there are as many religions as there are conceptions of god, each claiming superiority over the others. Hence the battles of the religions, and competitions and high pressure salesmanship to obtain customers. The religions agree only in the fact that all of them have something to sell which all can buy, but differ in what that something is, the price of the goods, and how they are to be obtained. Some deal in salvation, forgiveness of sins on this earth and eternal bliss in the next at the price of complete, servile submission to some set rules. Others transact business in virtues of various sorts. All of them, however, call for a liberal monetary support of the institution and its custodians. So, by making of religion that which every man can acquire, they reach the conclusion that religion is inherent in every man. All he needs is to be told that he has it, what it is that he has, his admission that he has it, and the business is done with, the transaction is completed. In a similar manner we can make all men into scientists, artists, philosophers, or anything else, by calling science, art or philosophy that which any man can attain in these fields, and turning our educational institutions, their curricula and teachers, into channels of propaganda for these accomplishments. What such a system would do to science, art or philosophy is appalling to contemplate.

Are men, then, naturally religious? The answer, in general, is yes. This is indicated by the survey we have

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made of the stages in the evolution of the religious consciousness and the meaning of this evolution. But at each stage or period in this evolution there exist individual differences in the degree of clarity and vividness of that view: from those for whom the view is so faint as to be practically non-existent (practically in the sense that it does not stir them to any striving) to those for whom it is the sole source and meaning of life. To Jesus, for instance, god is a reality of realities with whom he is everything, without whom he is nothing. He has his being in the being of god. To others of his day this influence operated in lesser degrees of intensity, until, in its least degree, god was but a sound to utter on certain occasions. What is of utmost importance to one person is of no significance to another, simply because he feels no need for it. What one does not hunger for, one does not seek to satisfy. To assume that he is hungry, only that he does not know it, and then to proceed to convince him that he is hungry, and to feed him, can only result in a case of indigestion. But one thing can be done with him who is not hungry. His can be brought to a realization of the hunger in those who do have it; the value of which is that he will not pretend that he has it, that he will not be victimized by those who attempt to give him a substitute for it, and that he will not scoff at those who show evidences of possessing it. In other words, he will become intelligent. In religion, he will proclaim himself neither theist nor atheist. He will be just what he is. He will know himself and therefore he will not impose on others. He will neither be open-minded, which most often only means

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being open-mouthed, nor closed-minded. He will only see things as they are, and rest content that he is fair and honest with himself and therefore with others. This is what we need in religion today, and always have needed, to counteract the propagandists of the religions who seek to impose their delusions on others for the promotion of their own power and profit. To teach people to understand is to lead them along the road of honesty and mutual self-respect, which means peace and harmony. Since the principal fruit of the religions has been self-deception and antagonism between men, it is an evidence that their concern is not with teaching, but with indoctrination and propaganda. And the only fruit of the tree of indoctrination and propaganda is evil. This is the difference between a naturalistic and supernaturalistic approach to religion. The naturalistic view puts god in man, so there can be no strife between the gods, and hence no strife between men. Supernaturalism, as a hangover from tribalism, places god outside of men, and the strife between the gods spreads dissension among men. When god is in man as a presence, he serves man as a challenge, in which there is no room for self-righteousness, ostentatiousness, dogmatism, imposition or self-glorification. God outside of man is a weapon, or a prop, or a consolation, an accomplishment, to be used by man for his selfish purposes, with all the consequences that follow selfishness and greediness. In religion, god is the embodiment of the highest and noblest aspirations of the human mind, and religion is the relentless pursuit of those aspirations. In the religions, god is a self-centered creature, haughty, all righteous, all powerful, all

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knowing; and religion, for those who accept this god, is the cultivation of these socially destructive qualities in oneself. The religions would impose law on man, for their god is a god of law. Religion gives life to man, for its god is a god of life.

4. As we have seen in connection with the social implication of religion, religion has far-reaching moral consequences. But religion is not morality, as some of the liberal religions maintain. Nor is it morality touched with emotion, as Matthew Arnold called it. There are several distinctions between the two, all of them arising from the fact that the moral ideas of religion arise from the personal experience of god.

The coming of the god-experience is in the manner of a creative act. It announces itself as an inspiration, as a sudden illumination or revelation, and as such, its effect is tremendous in intensity and breadth. It shatters the old personality, and out of the wreckage a new being arises, with a new outlook on life and the world. The transformation is as complete as it is sudden. Nothing is left of the old personality. There is a rebirth and a regeneration. The world is new as it is to the new-born infant. The suddenness of the coming of god and the new being is, however, deceptive. Both the coming of god and the rebirth develop gradually, so gradually as to be imperceptible until the experience is fairly mature. Such maturation is the nature of all creative experience. The person in whom it has been taking place has no knowledge that it has been in progress until it begins to blossom forth. Hence the feeling of objectivity, namely, the feeling that it is a gift handed to one by some external

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power. Coming with such tremendous force in its suddenness, its compelling powers are beyond resistance. The person becomes but a channel used by the force for its own purpose. It carries the person along with it, permitting of no backsliding, tarrying, vacillating or deviating from the one pathway. The call for moving along, for climbing and struggling, is insistent and persistent. "Woe is me, for I am undone, for I have seen the face of the Lord," exclaims Isaiah. The old self is done, there is no returning or resting. It is in the power of something that will not let go. "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye peoples, from afar; the Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name," cries Jeremiah. The voice is deep and far-flung; it sounds in the very depths of the person and echoes and reverberates to the ends of the earth.

The birth of a moral principle occurs in quite a different manner. Morality is a conscious, deliberate, rational search for the good or worthy life. It is a calm, dispassionate examination of possible alternatives, plausible propositions, with no possibility of any final conclusion. It is an ever becoming, and a never being, while religion is a being in a becoming. The journey to the discovery of the moral principles is not only endless, but there are doubts and vacillations on the way, and occasionally even detours or returnings. Socrates arrives at a conclusion; yet it is no conclusion, for as soon as one peak in the mental journey is reached another comes into view, and it loses its first appearance of security. A moral principle is not a firm rock or foundation, as is

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god. It is as a moving vehicle, on the way somewhere, without any assurance of getting anywhere. And if it does reach anywhere it may only discover on further inspection that it is nowhere, and the wearisome journey must be resumed.

A further difference lies in the manner of the communication of the discovery and what can be done with it. The discovery of god is reported, but the events in the process of discovery cannot be recounted. The moral principle, on the other hand, because of its rational nature, can be both reported and recounted. The result of the difference is that whereas morality can be taught, religion can only be evoked or aroused. Socrates presents a problem to his disciples as to the nature of truth or goodness or courage. Definitions are offered and examined as to their soundness. The result of the examination is a clarification of the nature of the virtue in question, and those who have followed the line of reasoning to its conclusion and have accepted it, will also accept the conclusion and act in accordance with it; for, as Socrates states, it is impossible for a person to know and act contrary to his knowledge. So Socrates, by a rational process, can demonstrate to his hearers that they do not know, which creates in them a desire to know, and as they get to know they also get to act. A religious experience cannot be treated in this manner. It presents itself as a certainty, not as a problem, and it is therefore not a matter for discussion, but for action. What has been found in this manner, what has come as a revelation, is reported with joy, enthusiasm, and eagerness. But it is not discussed, since there is nothing to



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discuss. There is nothing to be settled. It is settled. The only call upon the person to whom the experience has come is to pursue the experience. But there is no question about the reality of the experience, since the person has become the experience. So religion cannot be taught, since it is not a problem calling for rational solution. Morality is such a problem, as is indicated by the fact that we speak of it as a problem. The person who has solved it can therefore present to others his conception of the nature of the problem and the manner of its solution. Those who follow the presentation of the problem and the manner of its solution go over the same field as did the original explorer, and consequently know what he knows, and will act as he acts. They are instructed.

Morality, therefore, can be taught, since it is a problem as to the nature of the worthy and good life. When the person finds the answer, or is led along to an answer by another, he acts in accordance with it, and becomes moral. But religion, being altogether an overwhelming experience rising out of the very depths of one's being, can only come forth from within, where it has been germinating. It cannot be implanted from without as a rational presentation or as a problem and its solution.

Religion, furthermore, has moral significance that is above a moral idea, in scope and in intensity. The moral scope of the religious experience arises from the fact that it is an experience of a relationship between a part and a whole, while in morality the relationship is that of part to part. To the religious mind god is the universal Being in whom all beings have their ultimate, that is, their full and complete existence. The religious ideal is

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thus all-embracing and all-inclusive. God is mankind in its supreme possibilities, and the individual, in striving to become one with god, to lose himself in god, also becomes one with, loses himself in, mankind. In its moral consequence religion is the consciousness of one's relationship with mankind, the consciousness of the presence in one's self of all selves, and the presence of one's self in all selves. Morality, on the other hand, is the consciousness of the distinctiveness of one's own self, as contrasted with that of other selves. This consciousness of the distinctiveness of the individual self results in mutual self respect. So morality is a relationship between individual and individual, with highly beneficial social effects. Religion includes the element of respect for the self as a reflection of god, and therefore the respect reaches a state of awe and reverence for the individual. In these two respects then religion is a superior morality: it includes the moral element of respect for the personality even in a higher degree than found in morality, and it broadens this moral element beyond individual boundaries. Religion lifts morality to a higher sphere and extends it into limitless time and space.

The greater intensity of religion over morality arises from the fact that the ideal of morality is actualized in religion as god. In morality the ideal is yet to be. It is not here today, nor will it be here tomorrow. It exists only in the making, but it is never made. In religion the ideal is a Being. It exists *there* as an actual presence, an accomplished fact. The ideal in thought, in imagination, is projected into space as an object, an actual existence apart from man, and *out there* it becomes an

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objective for attainment. As a Being, an existence, the ideal is imbued with several traits that intensify its effect as a stimulus for striving.

As god the ideal does more than beckon. It is more than an attraction, as something desirable above that which is already possessed. It orders, compels, instructs, and commands. There is no resisting it. As god it is not the ideal that is in the making. The ideal is made. It is man who is in the making, in that in god he sees the substance of which he is the shadow. It is not the ideal that is unreal and which is to be realized; it is the person who is unreal and stands in need of realization. The ideal is shaped, and calls on man to shape himself in its image. The religious ideal, as god, as Being, is vivid and attainable. The moral ideal, as an ideal, is vague and unattainable, since it is ever shifting with attainment. In morality the ideal is within us, but projected into the future, as a possibility. In religion the ideal is beheld as an actuality. So the moral is what should be, or might be, or can be; while the religious is what *is*, only the person is as yet at a distance from it, but it is imperative that he get there. As morality, religion is the experience of the actual presence of the ideal as a Being which is the embodiment, the incarnation of all the qualities that man not only can be, but *is* in essence; only his essence is encumbered with attributes that hide what he is. So the striving in religion is not to *become*, but to *be* that which one is in substance, by discarding that which he is not. Religion is a purification of selfhood, whereas morality is an aspiration for selfhood.

### ***Chapter Three***

## **JESUS, THE RELIGIOUS GENIUS**

Jesus is the central figure both in Judaism and Christianity in that he is the culmination of the religious development of the one and the beginning of the other. His personality and his teachings therefore afford us an excellent subject for a study of the distinction between religion and religions, Jesus presenting us with every feature of the naturally religious mind, and Judaism and Christianity possessing every trait of supernatural religion.

### **THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS**

To understand Jesus, the religious genius, it is of utmost importance that a distinction be borne in mind between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. The Jesus of history is a personage who appeared in Jerusalem at a certain period in history and taught certain revolutionary ideas about God, morality, religion, the human personality, and human relationships. As such he was a Jew, in that his education, training and culture were Jewish, he limited his teaching career to Jews, and he belongs in the succession of Jewish prophets. However, he was more than a Jew of his day or any other day in that his outlook transcended that of his predecessors as well as his contemporaries in his conception of the in-

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herent and ultimate value of the human personality apart from any tribal or racial affiliations.

The Christ of faith comes from a different culture. He belongs to Greek metaphysics and mystery religions, in the succession of Dionysius, Mithras, Hercules, Attes, Tammuz, and other saviour-gods. Due to certain historical and psychological conditions and events the Jesus of history was transformed into the Christ of Christian tradition. He is an incident in the transition from Judaism to Christianity, and rejected by both. Judaism rejected him as a person for his teachings, which it had to do in order to remain Judaism, in order to survive. Christianity had to reject him as a savior-god, as the Christ, in the basic sense of the term as understood by Paul, in order to succeed in its ambition to conquer the world. So Jesus, whether as teacher or redeemer, whether as an earthly or divine figure, is an outcast in the world, condemned by Judaism as a menace, side-tracked by Christianity as an obstruction to worldly ambitions.

Who was this Jesus, apart from Jewish and Christian traditions that smother the true personality?

The Jesus of historical significance, he of unsurpassed value to the human family as a supreme spiritual figure, stands out vividly in all his glory and splendor in the collection of utterances we know as the Sermon on the Mount. These utterances have suffered every form of violence in the attempt to turn them into sanctions for the practices of a commercial-minded world. But the more severe the assaults upon them from ecclesiastical and secular interpreters the more does their beauty and truth

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reflect the supreme genius of him whose spirit they breathe in form and substance. They are indestructible because truth and beauty are imperishable. He who uttered them was the way and the light, the peace that passeth all understanding, the redeemer of the lost, the healer of the spiritually lame, halt and blind, the morally leprous, the worldly enslaved; for only in truth is there light, peace, health, and freedom. Only when we see Jesus in the light of these utterances and the utterances in the light of the characteristics of genius can we place a proper estimate on both.

All the characteristics of genius that distinguish it from the rest of mankind and which make it of such vast significance to the human family as the source of all true progress, whether in science, art, morality, or religion, arise from one basic factor in its makeup, namely, its rare power of creative imagination, which sends its mind roaming into borderless realms of possibilities and potentialities in the midst of the world of actualities that surround it. To the imagination of genius the world presents an unfinished, incomplete aspect. Things as they exist are but the raw stuff of things as they might, can, and must be. It is these possibilities, these as yet unrealized potentialities that indwell in actual existence, that constitute for genius the true realities in the world, and its endless efforts are exerted in the direction of bringing these hidden realities to the fore, to rescue them from the shadows that obstruct a clear view of them. To the ordinary mind the realities of the world are the hard and harsh facts of sensory experiences. They are real because the im-

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perative demand of life is for physical survival, and physical survival is conditioned upon proper attention to the physical environment, animate and inanimate. This is the meaning of life on the practical or biological level of existence, and the preoccupation with this level of existence is the mark of the ordinary man. His business is to get more and more of the same in order to make his existence secure and to command the attention and admiration of his fellow-men.

The life of imagination dwells on a different level. What is real to the practical mind is unreal to the creative mind. The old, the established, is but a promise, a harbinger, an invitation of what is to come. It hides at its heart the seed of growth which only needs the soil of mind to make it sprout and bring forth more nourishing, life-giving flower and fruit. Life does not mean standing still and demanding that the world give more and more of the goods it already has in its storehouse. Life means an adventuring, a searching and a finding of the greater in what is already great, a better in what is already good, a purer in what is already pure. Life is not an acquiring, but a begetting, not a piling up but a growing up, not a fulfillment, but a fulfilling, not a grasping but a reaching. So the imaginative mind struggles to bring forth, while the practical mind fights to bring in.

The personality of Socrates, as painted for us by Plato in several dialogues, shows us this unique imaginative mentality in its interests and attitudes as it functions among its fellow-men. In the *Apology*, Socrates stands before a court charged with preaching strange gods and

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corrupting the morals of Athenian youth. The prosecution demands his death. What would be the concern of the practical, sensible man in such a situation? Anything to get out of it. Socrates, however, insists on getting more deeply into it. He does not deny the charges, he affirms them. He puts his accusers and the court on the defensive. He will not plead, he will not compromise. He not only admits his reputation as a dangerous character, but gives a full account of how he came by it. The Athenians do not know what morality is, nor do they care. Nor are those who brought him to trial interested in morality. They are politicians who see an opportunity for advancement by posing as the protectors of public morals. If he is sentenced to death the Athenians will lose much and he very little, for they will deprive themselves of a man who prods them into thinking about virtue. Besides, posterity will point an accusing finger at them for killing their true benefactor and listening to those who prey upon them. So he is convicted, sentenced to die, and leaves the court-room, assuring the judges that he is angry neither with his accusers nor his condemners, since "no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death." He has but one favor to ask of them, and that not for himself. "When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reprovèd you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and think-



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ing that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands."

In the *Crito*, Socrates is urged by his friend of that name to escape with the help of friends who are eager and prepared to supply the needed funds for the venture. Crito insists that Socrates is obligated to do as he is bid, for the sake of his friends and his family. If Socrates dies, Crito will not only lose a friend who can never be replaced, but people will blame Crito for valuing money more than the life of a friend, for the many will not be persuaded that he wanted Socrates to escape and that he refused. Furthermore, by refusing to escape, Socrates is playing into the hands of his enemies who are hurrying on his destruction. And then Crito rises to heights of indignation.

"No man should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the end in their nurture and education. But you appear to be choosing the easier part, not the better and manlier, which would have been more becoming in one who professes to care for virtue in all his actions, like yourself. And, indeed, I am ashamed not only of you, but of us who are your friends, when I reflect that the whole business will be attributed entirely to our want of courage. The trial need never have come on, or might have been managed differently; and this last act, or crowning folly, will seem to have occurred through our negligence and cowardice, who might have saved you, if we had been good for anything; and you might have saved yourself, for there was no difficulty at all. See now, Socrates, how sad

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and discreditable are the consequences, both to us and you. Make up your mind, then, or rather have your mind already made up, for the time of deliberation is over, and there is only one thing to be done, which must be done this very night, and if we delay at all will be no longer practicable or possible; I beseech you therefore, Socrates, be persuaded by me, and do as I say."

In every respect Crito is voicing the attitude of the practical man. Socrates is to consider his life, his friends, his family, his reputation, his responsibility, and of course, vengeance on his enemies. To all of which Socrates gives an answer that reveals at one stroke the mind of genius. *It is not life that is to be chiefly valued, but the good life.* The other considerations mentioned by Crito, of money and loss of character and the duty of educating one's children, are "only the doctrines of the multitude." So Socrates must examine Crito's proposal in terms of the principle of the good life. Crito's zeal is valuable, if a right one, but if wrong, the greater the zeal the greater the danger. "For," says Socrates, "I am and always have been one of those natures who must be guided by reason, whatever the reason may be which upon reflection appears to me to be the best; and now that this chance has befallen me, I cannot repudiate my own words: the principles which I have hitherto honored and revered I still honor, and unless we can at once find other and better principles, I am certain not to agree with you; no, not even if the power of the multitude could inflict many more imprisonments, confiscations, deaths, frightening us like children with hobgoblin terrors." On examination Crito's proposal is

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found to contradict the principle of the good life, and Socrates calmly awaits the hour of death.

In this living portrait of Socrates, the moral genius, we have the features of the creative mind in whatever field it may operate. It is the mind that is detached from the interests and activities to which the multitude of mankind devotes its energies. Whereas the ordinary mortal pays lip-service to truth, beauty, goodness, ideals and aspirations, he concentrates his efforts on the chase after possessions, praise and power. He and his, the me and the mine, constitute his world. His standard for value is immediate gain, personal advantage. If he gives, it is in order to receive more in kind. His actions are calculating, scheming. His attention is self-centered and his thought is self-seeking. The world has no value apart from its meaning to him as profit and loss. Virtue is an investment in security, a price to be paid for an anticipated reward. How will this or that idea aid him in advancing his interests, is his one criterion for truth. What will this or that mean to him in satisfaction of desire and ambition, is his sole standard of good. Whatever he does not see immediately as personal profit does not exist. Whatever threatens his immediate desires is to be fought off as dangerous. The praise and approval of his contemporaries is the guide for his actions. Compromise and tact is the standard for intelligence. Whoever disregards these concerns is a dreamer, a madman, a visionary, to be kept from meddling in the affairs of men of affairs. Such are the Critos of the human family.

The Socrateses live by realities that are chimeras and shadows to the Critos. They search for life rather than

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seek to make a living. Their guiding star is an idea, a truth, a vision that is a reality transcending all the realities of the perceptual world. In this reality they find their life and being, with all other realities as the pathway that leads to that goal. They are disinterested, objectified, selfless. Neither family, nor fame, nor fortune, nor reputation matter. Their family is the world; their fame, fortune and reputation is posterity. Because the truth they seek to establish is not the truth of personal advantage, and the good they strive to know is not the good of self-interest, what they find and report becomes the truth and the good that is timeless and spaceless. The legacy of genius to mankind is the treasure of values hidden in life and the search for which is a growing into life.

It is such a treasure, the supreme treasure of the ages, that the Nazarene offers to mankind, and which his professional followers have been praising in precept and violating in practice for nineteen hundred years.

All the teachings of Jesus are contrasts of the practical mind with the creative, imaginative mind:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are

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they which are persecuted for righteousness, sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake.

The practical mind can know none of these beatitudes, for they operate against everything the practical mind seeks and values. It seeks honor and distinction, to be singled out from among others, so it is puffed up and inflated, boastful, and vainglorious, in order to attract attention to itself. It is self-righteous, self-satisfied, complete and finished, so it has nothing to mourn for or anything about which to be comforted. It cannot admit any weakness, any failure, any shortcoming, for that would lower it in its own estimation and deflate its ego. All its strength lies in its weakness. It cannot face itself, look within itself, for its gaze would meet only darkness and emptiness, a bubble that bursts into nothingness when lightly pricked, a form without substance, a manner without matter. It was Socrates' fate, as he himself explained to the court, to deflate the wind-eggs of his day, which resulted in his bad reputation and led to the accusation against him. He was humble and meek in his wisdom, mourned his state, and sought comfort of those who were proud and boastful. So he went to them to inquire of them.

"Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed him—his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination—and the result was as follows: When I began to

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talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is,—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage of him. Then I went to another who had still higher pretensions to wisdom, and my conclusion was exactly the same; whereupon I made another enemy of him, and of many others besides him.

“Then I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity which I provoked, and I lamented and feared this; but necessity was laid upon me,—the word of God, I thought, ought to be considered first. And I said to myself, Go I must to all who appear to know, and find out the meaning of the oracle. And I swear to you, Athenians, by the dog I swear!—for I must tell you the truth—the result of my mission was just this: I found that the men most in repute were all but the most foolish; and that others less esteemed were really wiser and better.”

The practical man cannot thirst after righteousness, he cannot afford to be merciful, for he must be self-assertive if he is to remain what he is and desires to be. He cannot be a peacemaker for he must be pugnacious, on his guard against those who would expose his fraud as well as against other frauds like himself. Warfare is the condition for his existence. Righteousness and

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peace would destroy him, for they mean equality. He cannot be reviled and persecuted, for it is his business to persecute and revile in order to maintain his position. The earth he inherits is the fear, distrust and suspicion of his contemporaries, and the contempt of posterity.

Genius is meek and humble just because it thirsts for righteousness, for truth and goodness, and it is persecuted by those whom its thirst for righteousness, truth and goodness would destroy, whom the peace that only righteousness, truth, and goodness can establish would expose as enemies of mankind. It is a mistake to suppose that genius is in conflict with the bulk of its contemporaries. The populace of Athens or Jerusalem was eager to follow Socrates and Jesus. And it was precisely because of their appeal to the populace that the politicians of Athens saw a menace in Socrates and the priests of Jerusalem sensed danger to themselves in Jesus. So politician and priest set out to destroy them by posing as the protectors of the law of man and God. Such is invariably the manner of the exploiter of mankind. He hides his insatiable appetite for power and pelf behind a smoke-screen of altruism and humanitarianism, shouting to the world that his sole concern is to sacrifice himself for the public good. But the public good is his good, the advancement of the general welfare is the furthering of his own selfish greed. And the public falls ready prey to his high promises for quick and easy results, for big returns on small investments, compared with which the promises of genius are distant and hazy. So the exploiter has an easy, initial victory,

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for which mankind pays the heavy price of the fruits of deception.

Genius is meek, humble, poor in spirit, mournful, because it thirsts for righteousness, truth and goodness. This thirst drives it to keep on seeking for the fountain of pure drink, and it drinks of that which can never be exhausted and of which it can never drink enough. So because it is ever thirsty it is being ever filled. Because it mourns it is comforted; and its persecution by the earthly is an indication of its reward in the heaven of its own mind. Herein lies true strength, true power. It is the strength generated by the knowledge of one's true state of being; and such knowledge is always that of incompleteness, of shortcoming, of a need for pushing onward to greater achievement in selfhood. All finalities of achievement, breeding pride and vainglory, are delusions, self-deceptions, ignorance, and therefore weakness. The feeling of strength of the proud and haughty is his real weakness, for he dare not face himself; while the consciousness of weakness of the humble and meek is his real strength, for he stands fearless before himself, in need of no support other than his knowledge of where he stands in relation to himself. Because his strength lies within himself he does not need the artificial props of praise, fortune, or power over others. He is independent because his dependence is on what is within himself. He is self-sufficient because he knows his own insufficiency.

Because the meek and the humble of the earth are also the strong and powerful of the earth it is they who inherit that which the earth contains of strength and



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power. The strong and powerful in their own estimation and in the estimation of their contemporaries have inherited only either the forgetfulness or the disdain of posterity. Jesus and Socrates have inherited the earth, because they saw clearly what mankind gropes for blindly, and what mankind gropes for is the light that will reveal the road to heaven on earth. The priest and politician of the day of Jesus and Socrates, and of all time, who would keep men blind for the better promotion of their dark purposes, shine on earth only by the reflected light of those they persecuted, which only reveals more clearly the darkness of their minds and hearts. The meek remain the salt of the earth which can never lose its savour, the light of the world which can never be dimmed, a city set on a hill that can never be hid, just because the light they seek is not hidden under the bushel of personal ambition, but stands in a candlestick that sheds its illumination unto all that are in the house of life.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till it be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach even so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your right-

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eousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The law of Jesus, of genius, is not the law of the priest, of the practical man. The law of the priest he denounced in severest terms as that of vipers and hypocrites. The law of the priest prescribed external observances, practices, and procedures that served the purposes of the priest. Its purpose was to make the populace subservient to the priestly class. That is the practical man's view of the law. A good law is a law that serves his good and a bad law is one that interferes with him. The law of the priest is not for the priest to obey. It is for him to use by demanding obedience to it. He is the maker of the law, and therefore above it. So he changes it whenever it suits his purpose, but always in the name of God. The priest has always found in the voice and will of God a reflection, an echo, of his own voice and will. God changes his voice and will whenever the priest sends him instructions to do so. There was a time when God was against evolution, now the priest has granted him permission to sanction it with certain reservations. What the priest wills, that is the law of God, of man, and of nature. Nature had no right to obey certain laws in the revolution of the planets or in the evolution of living forms, nor did man have any right to accept these laws, even to think of them, until the priest gave his sanction to both. For the practical man the law is the will of the powerful in the interest of the powerful.

Genius knows of no such law. Its only law is that to

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be discovered by searching into the nature of things. The law of Jesus is the law of the kingdom of God within man. It is the law of life, of growth, of development. Such a law cannot be imposed by will. It cannot be ordered, presented, enforced, or dictated. It has to be sought and found. And it is indestructible, for it is true since it is inherent, intrinsic. From such law no jot or tittle can in any wise pass unless heaven and earth pass. So long as heaven and earth remains, the law is being fulfilled, for it is the law of heaven and earth. To break one of these laws is to break life, but whoever fulfills them enters into life, into the kingdom of heaven.

Genius never seeks to destroy, to reform, to remake, to prohibit. It seeks to fulfill, to realize that which is as yet but a possibility. The possibility lies within the actuality, the greater is a potentiality of the lesser, the future is a promise of the present. Therefore destruction is folly, for by destroying that which is, that which can be is also destroyed. It is not existing institutions, the present laws, that are at fault. It is their abuse, their exploitation by self-seekers, that causes the evil. The evil is therefore not inherent in the existing; it is an imposition upon it. What is called for is not the elimination of the existing, but its purging, its purification, its fulfillment. The kingdom of heaven is here on earth. But it needs to be rescued by being recognized as it is in itself, and cleansed of the surface accretions that hide its true form and substance. The revolutionary, the reformer, would change and modify, and thereby bring about a condition which temporarily may be better than what it has displaced, but which will in the end only

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accumulate its own brand of evils. A changed form of government only means a new kind of politician, office-seeker, while changed laws only mean new devices for evading them. Change only means new names for old abuses or new abuses with old effects. The new is an improvement on the old only when it is a transformation of the old, not a departure from it. As a transformation of the old the new is its fulfillment. As a departure from the old the new is the former's destruction; a destruction which brings more destruction in its wake. It is the recognition that health is the normal state of the body—of which disease is but a lesser form—which enables us to cure the sick body by restoring the lesser to the greater. If we failed to see disease as a form of health, we would seek to eliminate the disease by destroying the body. Only that needs destruction which obstructs fulfillment. So Jesus, as all geniuses, came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill its promise by revealing its spirit and by exposing those who make the law do their bidding by distorting it.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.”

To the practical man this is the council of the weakling, the coward, the sanctimonious. He wants justice,

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vengeance, vindication. Not that he wants them for personal gratification; his only concern is "the principle of the thing"! The practical man is a bundle of principles for which he is ready to fight at a moment's notice. But a principle that calls for armed defense is not a principle of truth, but the rationalization of a personal grievance or a measure of supererogation. It is called a principle in order to give it falsely the appearance of impersonality. Every war in history has been fought for a principle, never for conquest! Only principles of justice and truth have prompted the church to persecute heretics! Every legal battle is fought in the interest of justice and law! Socrates was forced to drink poison, and Jesus was sent to the cross, to vindicate the principles of morality and religion! A principle of truth needs no such measures to be vindicated. The truth is its own vindication, its own justification. No wars of bitter words or of bloodshed and persecution were called for to vindicate the truth of the principles of science. It is only falsehood parading as truth that needs the force of arms in its defense because it is incapable of standing on its own merits.

Wherever there is force there is falsehood, and genius knows that falsehood cannot be conquered by counterforce. And genius is interested in truth, not in personal grievances and personal satisfactions. So it will not resort to retaliation. It will rather yield; for this is the part of wisdom and of courage. It is the part of wisdom because wisdom consists in the power of discrimination between the lesser and greater, and retaliation is a lesser, immediate satisfaction that means greater evil to come

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in the future. No man in his right senses will choose a greater evil when he can have the lesser. So retaliation is folly, not wisdom. It is ignorance of the good, not knowledge of the good. The man who will smite, who will force, who will drive, is mad; and he who incites the madman to greater madness by retaliation is twice mad.

Nor is there courage in retaliation. Courage does not lie in impulsive action. If obedience to impulse were courage then the most courageous of creatures would be animals and the feeble-minded among men. Courage lies in knowing what one is doing; in deliberated, controlled action; the carrying out of which entails the risk of popular disapproval or ridicule. The victory of retaliation is bought at the great price of self-defeat, while the defeat of non-resistance results in the great victory of self-conquest. What Jesus teaches is the victory over self, the conquest by a man of his worst enemy, the only enemy that can truly defeat him and lay him low, the enemy he calls his pride and his dignity, in vindication of which he is compelled to surrender his self-control in order to return evil for evil.

“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the son of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.”

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Hatred has two sources. There is the hatred that stems from self-love, and there is the hatred that arises from love of mankind. Self-love, which vaunts and flaunts itself, which seeks glory and praise, which is proud, boastful and vainglorious, hates those who will not flatter, submit, or fawn, but particularly those in whom it senses a menace to its position, those who might expose its emptiness and weakness. For this reason the puffed-up priest hated Jesus. He feared Jesus because he was afraid of himself, because Jesus revealed him to himself in his true colors. Hatred of others arises from a hatred of oneself, from a contempt for one's own pretenses, that one dare not recognize. Weakness cannot help but be suspicious of its condition, which however it cannot admit to itself, and it therefore hates strength in self-defense. Strength, however, does not hate weakness, as weakness. It hates weakness that parades as strength, because it hates falsehood. It would make weakness strong, transform falsehood into truth, but where weakness imposes itself upon others as strength, it distorts others as it is itself distorted. So Jesus hated the sin, the weakness, but he did not hate the sinner, the weakling, whose weakness he would destroy by making him aware of the strength within himself. For this reason Jesus hated the priest who would make others weak, and encourage them in their weakness, as a means of advancing his own strength over them. So the hatred of Jesus for the priest was his love for man. The man who loves mankind will hate the distortion of mankind by man and will arise in indignation against him who deliberately distorts others to promote

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selfish interests; but for him who distorts in ignorance he has sympathy. Jesus hated the sinner who flaunted his sin as virtue, and would have others honor him for his sin. He not only sinned against himself, but would use his sin to promote himself by leading others into sin.

So genius hates and loves intensely, but both its hates and loves are impersonal, unselfish. Love and hate are inseparable, the one growing out of the other. Because genius has an intense love of truth, it has an intense hatred of falsehood and of the purveyors of falsehood. For the victim of deliberate falsehood genius had pity. But the pity is not that of word of mouth, or of haughty superiority, or of soft sympathy. It is the wholesome pity of militant contempt, pity that compels action to remove the cause of the pity. It is not the pity that prompts charity and philanthropy. It is the indignant pity that would wipe out the need for charity and philanthropy as constituting a degradation of human personality. This is the pity of genius for man, with its admixture of contempt of man.

The true lover of mankind has contempt for men, since his vision of man only reveals the poverty and sordidness of individual men. This contempt, however, has an admixture of pity, of sympathy. Hence, whereas the true lover of mankind prefers to keep away from men, his sympathy draws him unto them, but only to strengthen his desire to be away from them. The more he mixes with them, the more polluted he becomes by them. It probably is no exaggeration to state that the true lover of anything hates the object of his love, for it stands between him and his goal. Yet he also loves it,



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since it is the only evidence of his love. Thus the lover hates the beloved because he loves love, yet he loves the beloved only so long as he hates. The true lover of friendship hates the friend because he loves friendship. Hatred is a form of love, for it can spring only out of love, and can exist only so long as love exists. He who does not hate does not love, has no love in him; and he who does not love does not hate, for he has no cause for hating. His hatred drives him towards love and away from the beloved; his love drives him to the beloved, away from love. He needs both, since both are one. Hatred is thus an expression, an embodiment of love; love is a projection, an idealization of hatred. Hatred arises from a violation of what one holds sacred and as of supreme value. One is jealous of such values, of their integrity and intrinsicity. Whatever tends to besmirch, belittle and degrade these values causes a hurt, a wrench, and it is this hurt that constitutes hatred. Now it is inevitable that the love is purer than the object on which it exercises itself, namely, the beloved. Yet, the search for the beloved, a desire for it, is the sole evidence for the presence of love. Hence the inevitability of hatred arising from love. The lover, by seeking the beloved object, shows his love; and by hating the beloved object, shows that love is still with him. When he ceases hating he ceases loving. Whatever one does not wish to run away from one does not wish to be with. The lover wishes to run away from the beloved because he wishes to be with love; but for the very same reason he wishes to be with the beloved. His desire to be *with* comes from the same source as his de-

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sire to be away *from*. By being with the beloved he expresses his love; by being away from it, he replenishes his love. The man, therefore, who loves mankind, is hurt by men, and wishes to avoid them; yet must come to them. He who does not hate men does not love them, he merely uses them. Jesus loved men because he loved God. For the same reason, however, he hated men. He hated the sin, which was God as viewed in man, namely, man himself; but he loved the sinner, which was man viewed by God. That is why he alternated between intense love of man and intense denunciation of man. He loved man as God, he hated him as man.

There is no need for us to dwell in detail on the other teachings of the supreme teacher of mankind to show their consistency and unity, and as revealing the mind of genius. "Be not anxious for the morrow about food, drink, and clothing, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." The giving thought unto the morrow excludes the giving thought unto truth, for tomorrow means the expedient, the advantageous, the apparently good, which in the light of the truth of after-tomorrow and all the morrows to follow turns out to be the deceptive, the illusory. Genius has no tomorrow, for truth, its sole interest, is eternal, and to truth everything is added; while from falsehood, even that which it hath is taken away, because what it hath is not substance, but shadow. The glory of the proud of the earth, who had only what they took away, and took away because their mind was only on the tomorrow, has sunk into oblivion. Because they gained the world of their contemporaries, they have

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lost the soul of mankind, which remembers them only for the legacy of evils they imposed upon it. The measure they meted out is being measured out to them; the judgments they pronounced are being pronounced upon them; the motes they saw in their brother's eyes have become the beams in their own eyes. The life they struggled to save from day to day they have lost eternally. They did their righteousness before men in order to be seen of them and praised; for which they have the righteous contempt of mankind. They layed up treasures on earth where moth and rust consumed them, and have lost the treasure of heaven that can neither be consumed nor stolen. Because they served Mammon they lost God. Mankind has done unto them as they wished to do to men. They sowed what they reaped. They are known by their fruits. Their sheep's clothing only revealed the better their ravening wolfish nature. They built their houses upon the sand, and the rain, the floods, and the winds of posterity have razed them to the ground.

But genius, which gives thought only unto the truth of all time,—because it seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness—has all things added unto it of life eternal. Because it gives of itself it comes into the self of mankind. Because it loses its life it gains life. Because it saves its soul it inherits the earth. The measure it metes out to man, man metes out to it in gratitude and thanksgiving. It is judged as it has judged. Because it speaks with the authority of truth, and not as the Scribes with the authority of words and force, mankind listens and is blessed.

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### THE SPIRITUAL CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

This is Jesus, the man of genius, the man of God, the spiritual giant, who was crucified in the flesh by the priests of his day, who was and is being crucified in the spirit by the priests of succeeding days. He himself described his fate at the hands of his professional followers:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,  
Neither cast your pearls before the swine:  
Lest haply they trample them under their feet,  
And turn and rend you."

The abuse of Jesus, the religious genius, lies not so much in the disregard of his teachings as in the mechanical mumblings of them on set occasions; in the pretense that they are being practiced; in their degradation by reinterpretations to sanction existing practices; and by the cowardly dodge of praising them as applicable to their day but unsuitable to present conditions. Each of these represents a distortion of Jesus and a crucifixion of his spirit.

The mechanical mumblings of these utterances encouraged by the churches is the worst of the distortions in that it renders service to Jesus in precept and violates him in practice. It is particularly the liberal churches who are guilty of this crime, since the orthodox groups at least have the virtue, dubious as it is, of ignoring Jesus, the religious teacher. As a choice between two evils, it is a greater virtue to ignore than it is to violate. It is far better to ignore than it is to pretend. The person who repeats "give no thought unto the morrow"

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or "if smitten on one cheek turn the other," with his mind at that very moment on the morrow and his heart harboring ill-feeling towards another is guilty of double violence. He violates Jesus by sacrilege, and he violates himself by self-deception. Jesus suffered and died for his teachings; and it is blasphemy of blasphemies to give the lie to them by turning them into empty sounds. He censored the Scribes and Pharisees for making mockery of the law and the prophets by mechanical mumblings and public display for self-glorification. The Scribes and Pharisees of succeeding generations have obtained their pound of flesh by turning him into the very mockery he so severely denounced.

The repeated attempts to interpret and re-interpret the teachings of Jesus throughout the ages, from the first century of Christianity onwards, is due to the desire to use him as a sanction for the moral fashions that arise in the course of changing generations. No generation can apply his teachings and maintain its status quo; nor is it willing to admit to itself that it is unwilling to live them, so apologists arise who proclaim in one breath that Jesus was the greatest moral teacher of the ages, and in the next breath maintain that he really did not mean at all what he said—or at least did not mean what he said in the way he said it. Clement of Alexandria started the fashion in the infancy of the Christian Church by instructing the rich Romans how to cheat Jesus by squeezing into heaven by means of liberal contributions to the church that will stretch the eye of the needle. The rich man can have both his wealth and his heaven, provided he comes into the church and supports

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the system. The game of making a verbal trickster of the Galilean has been ever since one of the main occupations of churchmen, with the enthusiastic cooperation and encouragement of the laity, to whom he is a good business proposition. So we are assured that Jesus did not really mean what he said about not laying up treasure on earth where rust and thieves might destroy them. What he meant was that the treasures should be handed over to the church or placed in safety-deposit vaults in banks! Nor did Jesus mean what he said about not giving thought unto the morrow. He meant that one should not worry about the tomorrow, for worry is bad for one's system! He wanted the business man to keep fit! Nor did he mean what he said about turning the other cheek. That was simply a lapse or a joke on his part, for did he not use a whip on the money-changers? He was no weakling, but a real he-man. So Mr. Bruce Barton tells us, with the blessing of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ. In every way Jesus was a modern business man, for did he not set an example by establishing the biggest business on earth in the Christian Church! And is not salesmanship of divine origin, since Jesus instructed his disciples to go out into the world and sell the Gospel! So Jesus becomes the vindication, the justification, for trickery, exploitation, the champion and stronghold of priest and politician who create the very conditions in the world that violate his vision of a kingdom of God on earth, a vision for which he laid down his life so that men may have life more abundant and everlasting.

Are these teachings then practical? Are they ap-

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plicable, or are they the wild fancies of a wild visionary? The answer is that if they are true they are practical, not in the sense of being expedient, suitable for purposes of exploitation, self-promotion, but for the general advancement of human welfare. That they are true and practical in this universal sense, irrespective of time and place, is attested to by their survival throughout nineteen hundred years, in spite of organized propaganda to destroy them by the professional moralist and ecclesiastic. Fancies and delusions do not and cannot live. They die of their own emptiness and inertia as quickly as they come into existence. All the attempts to desiccate and devitalize the living Jesus and replace him by a mythical ghost as a scapegoat for human filth have been futile; and the great spiritual genius is more alive in the consciousness of man than when he walked the streets of Jerusalem, ridiculed, maligned, and hounded by priest and politician. The kingdom of heaven on earth this dreamer saw in the kingdom of hell about him, as created by the scheming minds of his time, is, in the long run, the only practical road to substantial human welfare. What he taught as the condition for such a kingdom is the simple truth of religion in its highest reaches: the sanctity of the human personality as a reflection, an expression of the kingdom of God in man. And no peace on earth and good will to men is possible so long as men exploit each other, individually or in groups, as means to ends. If the teachings of Jesus are dreams, then dreams are the only realities, for the condition of the world today indicates that the realities of those who boast of being awake are delusions that lead to destruction.

## *Chapter Four*

### **JESUS IN RELATION TO JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY**

For Judaism, Jesus was a Jew who taught certain doctrines that threatened to undermine the Jewish Law and therefore endangered the Jewish nation, a crime for which he was put to death. For traditional Christianity he is a divine being, who, born of a Jewish virgin of the Holy Spirit and sent by God as an incarnation of Himself, suffered and died as an atonement for the sins of man. Both Judaism and Christianity reject him as a supreme religious genius; Judaism claiming that his teachings were mere repetitions of the teachings of the Old Testament prophets, while as a Jew he was a dangerous heretic; and Christianity sidetracking his teachings as secondary or mere incidents to his role as a savior-god. So the historical Jesus is anathema to Judaism and a manifestation of divine favor to Christianity. The two are related by the fact that without the historical Jesus and what happened to him as a result of his teachings there would have been no Christ; without Christ there would have been no Christianity, and the course of history would have taken a different turn. The course of events, then, that changed the historical Jesus into the Christ of Faith are of unparalleled historical significance, while the underlying psychology of



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these events presents an ever-fascinating theme for investigation.

What are the facts as we know them?

About the year 30 A. D., during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was procurator in Judea and Herod was king, there wandered in the towns and villages of Galilee a young Jewish dreamer and idealist, carrying a message of the approach of a new kingdom of God on earth, and calling upon the people for a new way of life in preparation for the new dispensation. He attracted large multitudes wherever he went, partly because of his great earnestness, partly because of the nature and appeal of his message; and partly because of his spreading reputation as a healer. He must have been a person of tremendous personal magnetism, deep in his pity for the poor and downtrodden, gentle and sympathetic with the sinner in ignorance, impatient with the haughty, self-righteous and ostentatious, fearless and furious in his denunciation of abuse and exploitation. In his teachings, his language was simple, direct, picturesque; the language of a poetic genius of a strongly religious and moral bent of mind. In this he stood in marked contrast to the professional religious teachers, whose utterances were formal and stereotyped. He spoke with the authority of personal conviction and great human sympathy; while the others uttered the set phrases of traditional legalisms from the heights of magisterial dignity and hauteur. After several months of wandering about in the provinces, he entered Jerusalem where he incurred the enmity of the entrenched Jewish powers because of his alleged heretical teachings. They seized

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him, tried him, convicted him of blasphemy, and handed him over to the Roman pontiff for judgment on the charge of proclaiming himself king of the Jews and therefore of attempting to set up a separate kingdom in Judea. He was sentenced to die and was crucified.

Such is the simple story of Jesus the Jew who became within a few years after his death the central figure of a cult . . . every tenet of which was foreign to Judaism, a cult the teachings of which would have sounded strange, to say the least, to the ears of Jesus and his first followers. Jesus was a Jew who addressed his message exclusively to Jews. His followers during his life and for a period after his death were exclusively Jews. But by the close of the first century A. D. his followers were practically all Gentiles, and Jesus the teacher completely disappeared; in his place there arose a mythical figure of Jesus The Christ, around whom there grew up a tremendous institution, the Christian Church. How did all this come about? What psychological factors of the period led up to it? How did an institution with all its legalisms, formalities, creeds and dogmas arise on the foundations laid by this great spiritual genius, the enemy of all institutionalism, legalism, formalities, creeds, and dogmas? The story has been often told, but without much regard for the psychological factors, and most often with marked ecclesiastical bias.

### JESUS THE JEW

Our knowledge of the historical figure of Jesus is derived almost entirely from three of the four Gospels of the New Testament. And these four sources are most

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unreliable, for the Gospel authors were not concerned with history, but with propaganda. They were interested neither in chronology nor geography, but in an idea. They wanted to produce effects, and they did so by whatever means possible. Even if they had the facts, they interpreted them to suit the idea, and if the facts were lacking they invented them. Thus the author of Luke improvised freely on Mark, and similarly the author of Matthew treated Mark to suit his purpose. Each author writes with some bias. Mark, the earliest of the Gospels, was written about 70 A. D. and is probably based on talks with Peter. It gives an account of the miraculous acts of Jesus, and does not mention his teachings. It was obviously written for the Gentiles, although it gives no genealogy of Jesus. The picture drawn of Jesus is that of a magician, wizard, and necromancer. Matthew incorporates Mark, expands on the miracles, and gives Jesus' teachings. He gives a genealogy of Jesus, tracing him to Abraham and David in order to show he was the Messiah as foretold in the Prophets. Obviously, Matthew wrote with a view to convert the Jews. Luke wrote for Gentiles. His report of the teachings of Jesus is probably the most authoritative in the Gospels. His object is to prove that Jesus came to save not only Jews but all men. Luke shows quite clearly the influence of Paul. He traces Jesus not only to Abraham, but to Adam, the father of all men. But all three agree on many points, particularly as to Jesus being of flesh and blood, full of compassion for men. Their purpose seems to be in the main to show Jesus as a man rather than a god. In John, written about the close of

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the first century, Jesus becomes an unearthly figure. He is a divine being who became flesh for a brief time. He is no conqueror descended from David, but the only-begotten Son of God and Light of the World.

What portrait of Jesus, the human personality, can we draw from these sources?

We have two keys in the Gospels that unlock for us the door to the real Jesus. The first is his reported statement that he came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it; the second, that he spoke as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. The first of these tells us that many sayings and acts ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels cannot possibly be true. We must remember in this connection that at the time the Gospels were written, Christianity had passed its Judaic stage, and many elements foreign to Judaism had entered into its doctrines. But Jesus was a Jew. He was born a Jew, was reared in the Jewish tradition, and his message was addressed to Jews, his disciples and followers were Jews, and he died a Jew. Consequently we must rule out of the picture of him in the Gospels—and they are quite contradictory—everything that is anti-Jewish.

But he must have been also a most unusual Jew, as is indicated by the impression he made upon the populace as being so markedly different from the Scribes, and in the antagonism he aroused among the Jewish parties who saw in him a menace to Judaism. Obviously, he must have differed both in the manner and the matter of his teachings from the Scribes and the Prophets.

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### JESUS AND THE SCRIBES

We find a portrait of the Scribe in the book of Jesus son of Sirach, otherwise known as Ecclesiasticus, written in the vicinity of 200 B. C. Sirach was himself a Scribe and his description can therefore be accepted as authentic, although undoubtedly highly idealized. He writes:

“Learning is the privilege of leisure. Husbandmen and artisans are the support of the social structure, but, wholly occupied as they must be in their several callings and often expert in them, they have no time for the wide-ranging studies that make the scholar. They are therefore not qualified to be called to the council or to take the lead in the assembly; they cannot sit on the judge’s bench, for they do not understand the principles of the law, and cannot bring out the rights of the case and a just judgment. Different is the case of the man who gives his whole mind to it, and concentrate his thought on the law of the Most High. He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and occupy himself with the study of prophecies, and pay attention to expositions of famous men, and will penetrate into the elusive turns of parables. He will search out the hidden meaning of proverbs, and will be versed in the enigmas of parables.

“He will serve among the magnates and appear in the presence of the ruler. He will travel in foreign countries, for he has experience of good and evil among men. He will resolve to rise early to the service of the Lord his creator, and will make his petition to the Most High; he will open his mouth in prayer, and seek forgiveness

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for his sins. If the great Lord please, he will be filled with a spirit of understanding, and will himself pour out like rain his words of wisdom, and praise the Lord in prayer. He will direct aright his counsel and knowledge, and reflect on the hidden things of God. He will make public the instruction he has to impart, and his pride will be in (knowledge of) the law of the covenant of the Lord.

"Many will praise his understanding, and his reputation will never be obliterated; the memory of him will not pass away, but his name will live to countless generations. Other nations will talk of his wisdom, and the congregation (of Israel) will tell forth his praise. If he lives he will leave a greater name than the multitude; and if he rests from his labors, it will be greater still."

The Scribes, then, were the professional students, interpreters and public teachers of the Oral and Written Law. Their authority was that of tradition *and whatever they read into that tradition*. They knew what was good and evil, and had prescriptions for the cultivation of the one and the cure of the other. They taught by handing out readymade and set rules. The pupil did not need to seek for himself within himself. He was to accept what they had to give. And for their devotion to study, they were to be singled out from the rabble with special privileges, opportunities, honors, and distinctions, as being wise above others and as the custodians, guardians, and mouth-pieces of God. The Scribe was to be conscious of his superiority, to take pride in it, to display it in public places, and to have recognition from others in their homage and praise. Honors, reputation

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and distinction were to be his by right of his position. This is how Sirach saw himself, and how the whole class of Scribes looked upon itself. They were good; they knew it, and they displayed it. In life and in death the Scribe was great and gloried in his greatness. For the Scribe, life was to fit into the mold he cast for it by his conception of the law of God. His law was primary, to which man was secondary.

Jesus was, by necessity of his nature and his outlook on life, opposed to the legalistic morality of the Scribes. He knew no authority other than the spirit of life seeking to know itself and to express itself. He knew no superiority in moral stature other than that of striving and seeking to grow into the spirit of life. No man was master over another; each man could be master only over his own life. No man could dictate life's course to another; each man must blaze his own trail and discover his own goal. The kingdom of God is within you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened, ask and it shall be given. There is no royal road to life, surveyed, engineered, and paved by other hands. Life is not a mapped-out country. It is a primeval wilderness in which each man must venture out for himself, make his own discoveries, clear his own land and build his own home. He may have guidance and help; but the final decision must be his own, or his life does not belong to him. No one can see the world for him, for no one but himself can look out upon the world through his eyes and his mind.

## JESUS IN RELATION TO JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY

### JESUS AND THE PROPHETS

It is often said that Jesus taught nothing new that the Prophets of the Old Testament had not taught. That is true, but not in the sense it is meant to convey, as a disparagement of Jesus. It is true in the sense that genius is no innovator, faddist, or revolutionist. It does not seek to displace but to develop; not to destroy but to fulfill. In the sense of the new as a development and fulfillment, Jesus is an advance upon the Prophets in the manner and the matter of his teaching. In the manner of his teaching Jesus is an advance upon the Prophets in that whereas they were reformers and preachers, he was a restorer and teacher. And in the matter of his teachings he is an advance upon them in his conception of God, of the worth of the individual, and of the seat of virtue.

Even if Jesus had said nothing that had not already been said by his predecessors, he would still stand out prominently as the greatest of teachers; for the great teacher is not necessarily he who introduces novel ideas which may only be fancies or delusions, but more so he who presents old teachings with a fresh emphasis, in a new light, and with greater effectiveness. Even if it were true then that Jesus only repeated what the Rabbis or Scribes had said, he spoke with a new and unknown authority that went to the hearts of his hearers, as is shown by the multitudes that flocked to him, by the affection and confidence he inspired, as well as by the bitter hatred he aroused in the pedagogues,—the fruit of jealousy and envy. He spoke with the authority of



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personal experience of which his words were the expression and therefore conveyed the warmth of living truth to his audiences. His words were contagious. They aroused a sympathetic understanding. The old truths that had become but formal pronouncements, the cold words and phrases of injunctions, maxims and instructions, became fiery darts that warmed the blood of all who were within their reach, and who left the presence of him who uttered them with enlightened minds and glowing hearts. The law was no longer but a set of external rules to be blindly obeyed as a duty to man or God, as a demand or command; but an inner compulsion of one's being which could neither be resisted nor violated. Such a law drove one to fulfillment, to strive to live in accordance with it. It could not be destroyed.

In producing such effects upon those who listened to him because they could not resist him, Jesus was the true teacher and restorer, in contrast to the prophets, who were preachers and reformers. The Prophets would substitute one law for another. The new they would introduce involved the destruction of the old. They would not fulfill, they would replace. The old practices were evil in themselves. God did not want them. He wanted something altogether new and novel. He wanted righteousness and justice in place of praise and sacrifices. But the new law was to be put in operation by the old method of compulsion. It was to be obeyed as the will of God, as his commandment. Man was to be remade, reshaped, reformed in accordance with the new mold constructed for him; and this was to be accomplished

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by the old method of compulsion, driving, pleading, threatening, remonstrating.

So in their conception of the nature of progress in virtue, the Prophets were reformers, who would replace one legalism with another; and in their method they were preachers, who called to men for submission and repression. The two are inseparable. He who would hand out rules would also enforce them, or the rules are useless. Rules are made to be obeyed, and they replace other rules that have been found to be either ineffective or unenforceable. For the reformer and preacher, human beings are experimental subjects for theories of moral virtue. When one theory fails, another is to be tried. Only the method of experimentation for each theory remains the same; namely, the method of attempting to coerce the human being to fit into the theory. About the efficacy of force as a method of betterment the reformer and preacher never raise a question, for if they did raise it and found it wanting, they would have to give up being reformers and preachers. This the reformer cannot do; so if one rule fails, he makes another and proceeds to call for its acceptance.

The effect of this conception of moral progress and its method is invariably the opposite of what it is intended to produce. Its intention is to bring about a change of heart by the acceptance of a legalistic principle of conduct. But the principle may be accepted, even followed for public display, while the heart remains in its former condition. Innerly the person remains the same; only he puts on a different show on the public stage. It is not conviction that guides his action, but fear, ex-

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pediency, and desire for public acclaim. He wants to sin as before, and does sin, but does it under the guise of virtue. The exploiter can go on exploiting, and at the same time he can be charitable, just, merciful and righteous by handing out a pittance to the victims of his exploitation. So the reformer and preacher, calling for adherence to new laws, which on the surface appear as correctives for old evils, only succeed in perpetuating the old evils by enabling the evildoer to parade in the garb of virtue. Even if he agrees with the precept, his agreement is a cold acquiescence and his practice a cold submission. He drives himself because he is driven. He is in conflict with himself; and if he deviates from the path of virtue, he rationalizes his deviation. There is thus no moral health in him because he is fed moral food that he does not assimilate. And in the meantime, while he basks in the sunshine of his own consciousness of virtue and public honor the poor and the oppressed remain poor and oppressed, the victims of his greed and the objects of his virtue, for whom he has a contempt disguised as pity.

The Prophets, then, in proclaiming God's will as calling for justice and righteousness in place of sacrifices, substituted one legalism for another. And while, on the surface, they appear as having made an advance in the priestly code, they only gave the evil doer a new disguise for his evil doings. Instead of hiding his sins behind the screen of temple gifts, he could hide them behind the gift of charity and philanthropy.

The teacher, as restorer, differs radically from the reformer and preacher in his outlook on the source and

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nature of virtue, and on the method of making human beings virtuous. Virtue, for the teacher, is not to be derived from adherence to rules prescribed authoritatively. It is not an acquired habit of conduct. It has to be sought within oneself, and is to be found only in the progressive discovery of the substance of one's being. As this substance is being discovered, it manifests itself outwardly in conduct that is in keeping with the spirit from which it flows. Virtue is a transformation from within, not an acquisition from without. There are no laws for virtue handed down readymade and changeless from some source outside and beyond the individual, and calling for submission against the will of the individual. There is but one law, inherent in human life, to be sought and found only within oneself, from which action flows as an inner necessity. In being virtuous the person does not violate his nature, suppress himself. He is being true to his nature, giving expression to himself. Virtue is not a learned technique, a procedure in accordance with established practice. It is a creative art in which every product is a record of an adventure and discovery in living. The new, instead of being a departure from the old, is a revelation of its potentialities, which are its true substance; and as the new inherent in the old is being revealed, the old assumes the form of the new as its true reality. Virtue is a growth, a development in selfhood. It is not a violation of it. It is a becoming of oneself, not a suppression of oneself.

For the teacher there are no two opposing forces in life, the one good and the other evil, each in constant battle array against the other, with evil on the offensive

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and good on the defensive. The only reality is the good. Man does not seek evil deliberately, or prefer evil to good. He seeks only the good, but he may have misconceptions of its nature and thus be led into evil. But this is not his choice, it is his mistake. He has not sought far enough, so he mistakes the lesser attainment for the greater attaining. Man is not in conflict with himself. He is not being driven by his better self against his worse self or by his higher self against his lower self. He is but one self at any one time. If he is the lower self it is because he has no conception of a higher self, for if the higher self were before him, the other would disappear by being transformed into the higher. The ideal does not battle the actual, since it grows out of the actual and is therefore one with it, for as the ideal comes forth it carries the actual along with it. The relationship of actual and ideal is that of shadow and substance, of the unreal to the real; and the search, the struggle, the striving, is to restore the shadow, the unreal, to substance and reality. This search, this struggle, this striving, is virtue.

The teacher, therefore, would not implant virtue. For him it is already present, but not manifest. All it needs is the consciousness of its presence to bring it to fruition. This consciousness cannot, however, be brought about by preaching, exhorting, warning, threatening, or promising. Whatever one does not feel in need of he will not search for; and needs cannot be inculcated or indoctrinated; they cannot be forced into one. Needs can only be brought out of one by a slow process of development, of planting the seed and nurturing its growth.

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The reformer would take his own ripe fruit which may or may not be sound, and feed it to all indiscriminately, urging them to take it or even forcing it down their throats as a medicine for moral ill-health of which the patient may be unaware. The teacher would awaken the patient to his unhealthy condition and thereby create in him a desire to cure himself, to restore himself to his normal, natural condition of health. Once the patient has done this he will be alert and constantly on his guard against any lurking dangers, for he knows from personal experience and not only from hearsay. He who knows that which he has discovered for himself, even with the aid of another, can never forget, and therefore will not backslide into a former condition. He has grown and cannot become smaller, since the greater is a development of the smaller and contains it. But he who accepts what another calls his ripe fruit of knowledge, only carries about with him that which is not of himself, and which therefore burdens him and is to be cast away at the first opportunity. So the teacher would not hand out ready-made virtue in which the individual is to clothe himself while on the inside he remains the same person. He would strip him naked, expose him to himself as he actually is in all his purity, and thereby have him cast off the false adornment which made him see himself as he was not.

Such a teacher was Jesus, and as such was a marked advance on the Prophets. He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. The fault was not with the law but with the evils practiced in its name. What was needed was not the elimination of the law, or a change

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in the law—which means only a new law—or the substitution of a new evil for an old one, but to strip the existing law of its falsehood and restore it to its true nature. But it is not the law of the Scribes or the law of the Prophets. The true law is not a legalism. It is precisely the making of the law into legalisms that constitutes its distortion and bears evil fruit. Hence Jesus eschews any set rules and fixed regulations. These run contrary to life. Life is not submission to rule. It obeys the law of life which is growth. The law is derived from life, not life from the law. Man was not made for the Sabbath, the Sabbath was made for man. It is man who is primary, and no law can have any soundness in it that violates life; and it is bound to violate life if it is a fixed law into which life is to fit. And any law for which divine origin or divine sanction is claimed is a fixed, unchangeable law, the violation of which is considered as a sin against God. But it is not the violation of the law that is a sin, but the law itself, for it violates life, and the violation of life is a sin against God, who is life in man. Sin is the violation of the kingdom of God within oneself or in another self. And those who call for submission to law in the name of God violate the law of God in man.

Jesus, then, was a naturalist in his conception of virtue, in contrast with the supernaturalism of the Prophets. He would not have human beings find virtue in prescriptions and decrees. He would have them seek virtue within themselves and grow into life with the knowledge discovered in the search. Virtue by prescription is too easy. It leads to the consciousness of being

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virtuous, to self-righteousness, which he condemned in the Scribes and Pharisees. Such virtue is sin in that it creates self-deception. The virtue of self-knowledge is difficult, for it keeps one constantly conscious of his lack of virtue. It is the virtue of the courageous, of those who dare face themselves, and who will not be deceived into compromise with themselves. Such virtue is uncompromising and demands everything from man. It is for this reason that Jesus, as Claud Montefiore states, "demands the utmost from those who would seek to be his disciples, or from those who, with full intensity of purpose, would desire to enter the kingdom of God. His ethical teaching at its highest, or, as a whole, is an ethical teaching for heroes." He demands the utmost of his followers because he demanded the utmost of himself, and he demanded the utmost of himself because the self he knew would tolerate nothing that was not of its own substance. "Whoever he be of you that renounces not all that he has cannot be my disciple." He asked only that of others which he had himself done, because he could not do otherwise. There is no tyranny comparable to that exercised by an ideal conceived in the passion for the truth of life, born in the labor and pains of the vision of its discovery, and nurtured by the eager anxiety for its realization. As it is nourished along it grows in the intensity of its demands. It will brook no obstructions, it will tolerate no delays, it will know no compromises. It sees nought besides its own vision and it hears nought besides its own voice. The vision is blinding and the voice is deafening, shutting



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out all sights and all sounds that might distract it from its one all-embracing and all-inclusive goal.

It was this blessing-bestowing tyranny of the inner call of the voice of selfhood that the teacher Jesus sought to awaken in man as the voice of God crying within him to repent and return unto his maker, unto that of which he was made, and which he unmade by his concern for the things of the world. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the world but lose his soul," for one cannot have both. The Prophets made the possession of both possible. One could gain the world and keep his soul by returning to the world a part of what one had taken from it. Therefore justice, righteousness, mercy are most convenient virtues. They cover up the sickness of society with the surface flush of health. They do not remove the causes of the evil, they only alleviate it and thus perpetuate it. The teacher Jesus would destroy the evil by getting at its roots, which is the exploitation of man by man because of the false conception of himself; he would restore man to the truth that is within him, and by this truth create the kingdom of heaven on earth by transforming the earth into a heaven. In such a world there would be no call for justice and mercy and righteousness, for the very evils that make a virtue of these practices would be non-existent.

Jesus is an advance upon the Prophets not only as a teacher of man versus the reformer of men, but also in his conception of God in relation to man, and in the value he places upon the individual.

The Prophets conceived of God as dwelling above and beyond man but maintaining a certain relationship to

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man and to the world. This relationship consists in man being subject to God, waiting upon God to tell him what and who he is, and how he is to conduct himself. If man obeys the will of God he will be blessed, if he disobeys he will be cursed. However, God's judgment is not arbitrary. He is a God of justice and mercy. As a just judge, he distinguishes between the guilty and the guiltless. But his punishment of the guilty is not necessarily in proportion to the offense. God is not vindictive. He tempers justice with mercy. Even the guilty can be pardoned if they repent. If God were only just, and not also merciful, man would stand condemned, since he is an inveterate sinner, either willfully or through failure to learn the will of God. "In order, therefore, that the race may continue to exist, even though many individuals go to the bottom, he mingles with justice, mercy, which in his benevolence he employs even to the unworthy; and not only has he mercy where he has inflicted judgment, but he inflicts judgment where he has had mercy."<sup>1</sup>

Without the fear of judgment man would destroy himself by evil, but without God's mercy God would destroy him for his evil. For the sake of man's good, God must be both merciful and just. In his mercy and justice, God shows his love for Israel. It is the love of the father for his children. He chastises them and judges them, but his chastisements and judgments are for their good as a corrective measure and deterrent influence. It is not vengeance God exercises on Israel, but discipline; hence his punishment for disobedience of his will is far

<sup>1</sup>George Foote Moore, *Judaism*. Vol. I, p. 289.

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below the deserts of the offender. So God's mercy and justice flow from his love. God is the sole ruler of the world he created in accordance with his own will and in keeping with his character. For man he willed that he be righteous and good, since God is righteousness and goodness. He has told man what he requires of him. The law is for man's guidance in choosing between good and evil. If he chooses the path of righteousness he chooses life. If he walks the path of evil, he is on the way to destruction, unless he repents, in which case God's justice and mercy will save him.

This conception of God in the Prophets follows necessarily from their conception of virtue as obedience to authoritarian law. It follows therefore that the advance Jesus made on the conception of virtue will also mean a different conception of God. Since virtue is inherent in man, God is also indwelling in him. Hence God's only command to man is to hearken unto the divine voice within him, to seek the kingdom of heaven within himself. There is no help for man outside himself. He is his own help, his own guide, his own savior, his own way, and his own light. Mercy, justice and righteousness Jesus never mentions. There is no place for them in the virtue of self-knowledge which is also the knowledge of God. The man who is engaged in the adventure of self-discovery cannot sin deliberately. If he does sin, it is because of ignorance, and ignorance cannot be removed by injunction and exhortation. It calls for an awakening to one's condition. An outer God of mercy and justice is an indirect invitation to sin, since the sin can be forgiven by repentance. In an inherent God there

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is no need for forgiveness since the man who has discovered God within himself cannot sin. The very fact that he does sin is an indication that he does not know God. One cannot be fed knowledge; it must grow from within. Such knowledge cannot be violated, since the knowledge and the person are one. If the orders come from without they are subject to violation since they run contrary to what the individual has been doing and therefore wants to keep on doing. Hence he must have promises of rewards and threats of punishment in order to do that which he does not wish to do. But an order that comes from within is its own stimulus and driving power. One cannot violate that which he is. Violation results from a conflict between what one is and what he is told he should be. Therefore, no true virtue can result from a God who dwells outside of man and issues orders to man. Such a God fights man and man fights him. It is a continuous battle between two opposing forces in which the victory is now on one side and now on the other. But a victory won by the God within oneself is a lasting triumph since it is a victory over oneself, a transformation of the lesser by the greater. It is a growth in moral stature.

A further contrast between Jesus and the Prophets is in their conception of the worth of the individual. The prophets were ardent nationalists. The single Israelite was a soldier in the army of Israel, God's chosen people, and his value lay only in promoting the purpose God intended Israel to fulfill. The Israelite was to practice virtue, to obey God's will, in order that God might reward the nation by restoring it to its former national

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glory and power, make it supreme among the peoples of the earth. It is the good of the nation that matters, and to which the individual must be subservient. It is Israel that is constantly on the lips of the Prophets, and they knew the individual only as an Israelite, as a member of the nation, rather than as a distinctive personality. Whatever consideration the individual Israelite received from God was not for his sake but for the sake of Israel as a whole. If the individual Israelite obeyed God's will, it promoted the welfare of Israel. If he disobeyed, Israel was endangered. "It is in accordance with the whole tenor of prophecy," writes George Foote Moore, "whose warnings and exhortations as well as its promises and consolations are addressed directly to the nation in its religious character, that the love of God should be usually his love for the people collectively; and the Jews of later times understood it similarly as embracing all members of the people. But the same individualizing process which translated the prophetic doctrine of national retribution and national return to allegiance and obedience into individual retribution and individual repentance, appropriated for the individual, not only the mercy and loving kindness of God, but its origin, the personal love of God."

God, in other words, loved the individual only because he loved the nation, since the nation included the individual. In himself the individual had no worth. This is the basic characteristic of all nationalism. The individual is known only as a label. Whatever he may be as an individual is secondary to the group trade-mark he bears. He is a Jew or a Christian, or an Englishman,

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the more dangerous because of his appeal to the multitude. An end had to be put to his activities, for his success would mean the extinction of Judaism. It was either Jesus or Judaism, a single person or the people of Israel. There could be no question as to the decision. The person had to die so the nation could live.

So Jesus was seized, tried, convicted as a traitor and blasphemer, sentenced to death, and crucified. Had this been the end, Jesus would never have been heard of, Christianity would not have arisen, and the course of history would have been different. There were a few, however, to whom his death was not an end but a beginning. While he was with them he was their Messiah, the promised Redeemer of Israel, the Anointed of God, and his death could not rob them of their hope. The shock of his death only served to strengthen their conviction of his Messiahship. They were simple folk, untutored and unsophisticated. They did not reason, they did not speculate. It was impossible that they had been deceived. Jesus had spoken as no man they had ever heard had spoken. His death must have been but an event in his mission, ordained by God. So they dreamed, and the dream became a reality. They saw him again. He spoke to them, and instructed them. He told them he would come again and fulfill the promise of the kingdom in which they would be the princes. They were to wait for him. So they formed a community in Jerusalem under the leadership of Peter, the favorite disciple because the weakest of the twelve, united by a common hope of things to come. But they were not Christians. They were Jews. Their hope was a Jewish hope, in keep-

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were those in degree of attainment of Godlikeness. The sinner he saw was not he who had broken the commandments of the God of Israel, but he who had violated the law of his being in God. And this law was not the law handed down from a God who preferred one people over another, or one person over another, because he belonged to the favored people, but a law that was present in every person and which made all persons equally favored of God.

What then is the relationship of Jesus to Judaism. It is obvious that he did not set out to find a new religion. He was a moral and religious genius who knew no "isms," and therefore did not preach *a* religion, but taught religion. As a teacher of religion he was neither Jew nor Christian. In the Judaism of his day as practiced by his co-religionists he saw a distortion of religion against which he protested, and he sought to lead his contemporaries from falsehood to truth. Had he been a Christian in the sense of the Christianity established in his name, he would have protested against the Scribes and Pharisees of Christianity as he did against those of Judaism. Wherever there is *a* religion of any variety, with its formulas of set beliefs and practices, a Jesus would be in conflict with its advocates. There is nothing in any of his utterances that bears the earmarks of sect, creed, or dogma; they cannot be recognized as belonging to any one of the historical religions. Whatever is ascribed to him that makes him out to have been a propagandist for any established system of morality or religion is a spiritual crucifixion of the

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greatest spiritual genius of the ages on the part of exploiters of human credulity and human aspiration.

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Jesus was crucified about the year 30 A. D. By the time the New Testament books came into existence—somewhere between 70 A. D. and the close of the century—the earthly Jesus, the religious genius, had been already almost completely displaced by a heaven-exalted Christ and the pre-existent Son of God. How did this transplantation, this displacement of an earthly figure by a mythical figure come about? The soil must have been present in the contemporary conditions, ready to receive the seed. The seed was the Messianic hope of Israel, and the soil that developed the strange flower we know as Christianity was a combination of the influence of Hellenistic culture on the Jews of the Diaspora, and the genius of Paul of Tarsus.

### THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

At the time of Jesus, Palestine was seething with revolt against the yoke imposed upon the People of God by Herod and the Roman Procurators. This was nothing new. For close to a century the Land of Israel had been the seat of wars, rebellions, outbreaks, and riots. The Jews were of course no exception in the treatment they received from the Roman rulers, but none of the subjugated peoples were as sensitive about it as the Jews, in spite of the fact that Rome was not only tolerant and liberal in matters of religious worship, and pro-



claimed it by law, but also granted the Jews many privileges withheld from others. This, however, meant little to the Jews in view of their past history and religious tradition. They looked upon themselves as a peculiar and exceptional people, chosen by God to rule over the peoples of the earth. And the Prophets had assured them that the day of deliverance was at hand provided Israel would repent of its sins and return to its God. Jeremiah had foretold that the new Judaea was to fall heir to "the riches of the Gentiles," that "kings should be their nursing fathers," that all nations "should bow down to them with their faces to the ground," and "should lick the dust of their feet," that Jerusalem's "foundations" should be "sapphires" and its "windows carbuncles," that "enemies should be cut off and great should be the welfare of its children." And Amos had delivered unto them the message of God, specifying whence the deliverer is to come. "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, 'The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.' In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: 'That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name,' said the Lord that doeth this." And likewise Jeremiah: "Days are coming, saith the Lord, that I will raise up to David a righteous scion, and he will reign, a king, and prosper, and do justice

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and maintain righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be delivered and Israel live in security; and this is the name by which he shall be called IHVH—Sidkenu.”

How, then, in view of the advent of the return to the golden age of the past, the restoration of the early monarchy, the liberation of Israel from the rule of foreign oppressors and its moral and religious regeneration, could Israel submit to Roman oppression, or mix with the heathen. The restoration was to be hastened by the meticulous observation of the written and oral law. Yet the Roman Procurators would force the Jews to break the commandments of God against contamination by adopting the ways of the heathen. This attitude Romans could not understand. “Images of the Emperor, for example, were not religious but only political emblems, yet the Jews deafened the whole world with their protests against them. The Olympian games and wrestling contests, again, had nothing to do with religion, and were good in themselves, yet the Jews raved against these also. And what had theatres and circuses to do with religion? Yet the Jews would bar them in Judaea. And in the case of so useful a matter as aqueducts, why could not the Temple “Qorban” funds be used to provide them? Yet the Jews nearly raised a rebellion over it. It could be nothing but sheer obstinacy and an innate rebellious nature.”<sup>1</sup>

Into this religio-political seething cauldron stepped the spiritual-minded, God-intoxicated, visionary Nazarene. It was inevitable that his simple-minded disciples,

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Klausner, *Jesus Of Nazareth*. 1927, pp. 168-169.

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with their Messianic tradition of a political-religious restoration of Israel, should look upon him as the promised redeemer. His unusual personality, his language, his unearthliness, all marked him off from being just a mortal like themselves or other men. He had about him every mark of a divinely favored being. So he could be none other than the prince of the house of David promised by God to his people.

It was likewise inevitable that Jesus should come in conflict with the dominant Jewish parties of the day, the Sadducees and Pharisees, all zealous Jewish patriots, each with different ideas as to the manner of Israel's redemption, but to the aspirations of each of which Jesus was a menace.

The Sadducees were descendants of the priestly house of the Zadokites and constituted the aristocratic party of the rich and proud Jews. To this party belonged a large part of the priestly caste of Jerusalem, which is true of the priestly class of any age. The Sadducees were ambitious for political power and ardent champions of the written law, a universal trait of those that occupy the seat of authority, whether secular or ecclesiastic. For the sake of political power, they sought to ingratiate themselves with the Roman authorities, while in the interest of ecclesiastical domination over the Jews they insisted on the letter of the rabbinical law, of which they held themselves the custodians and guardians. To these politicians, both lay and cleric, Jesus was a double menace. He threatened their position both with the Romans and with the Jews. He was a disturber of the peace through the multitudes that followed him, and for

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this the Romans would blame them, since they passed as the leaders among the Jews. And he threatened the position of the priestly caste among them by his dangerous teaching that there was no need of intermediaries between man and God, since God dwelt in each man and all that one needed was to seek Him within oneself. Besides, he openly denounced them and even drove their kind from the Temple. So, for their safety, he had to be removed.

The Pharisees were the party of the people, the backbone of Judaism, the proponents of the written and oral law. In the words of Josephus, "The Pharisees have delivered to the common people by tradition from a continuous succession of fathers certain legal regulations which are not written in the Law of Moses, on which account the Sadducean sect rejects them, affirming that what comes from the tradition of the fathers is not to be observed." The Pharisees thus represented an enlightened, a progressive form of Judaism, but a Judaism rooted in the observance of the Law and thus keeping itself pure and unadulterated from foreign elements. They were strict separatists, and held the Sadducees in disdain because of their dealings with the heathen Gentiles. To the Pharisees Jesus presented a menace because his teachings threatened the destruction of Judaism. He seemed to have little regard for the Law, openly violated the Sabbath, consorted with publicans, sympathized with sinners, and thus made light of what to them were the most weighty matters upon which depended the preservation of God's word and God's people. To the Pharisees Jesus was a heretic, an atheist, a blasphemer,

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or a Frenchman. Whatever value he has is primarily derived from the label he bears. And each label is claimed by its bearers to be better than the labels borne by other label-bearers. This is the source of all chauvinism, national quackery and jingoism, spreading hatreds and suspicions among the peoples of the earth.

Jesus is the supreme individualist of the ages. His concern was exclusively with personality. The individual Israelite as a human being with a divine spark in him was the only reality and all that mattered. Even if it is true that this individuality was limited to Jews, as some utterances attributed to him in the Gospels tend to indicate, the fact remains that his outlook meant the breaking down of all barriers between race, color, sex, and creed, leading to a universal brotherhood of man, and of peace on earth. Nowhere does he speak of Israel. All his utterances are addressed to individuals and concern only the individual. His God speaks to the individual consciousness. The kingdom that is to be established on earth is not the politico-religious kingdom of the Prophets in which Israel is to be predominant, in which Israel's God is to rule in righteousness over all the nations. It is a spiritual kingdom in which individuals are to live in unity and harmony because of the consciousness of their common life in the God within them. This was not a theory or an aspiration with him. It was a living personal experience. He had no ambitions for Israel as a people. He only saw the Israelite as a person distinct in himself as an image of his maker, and belonging to but one class, one group, one nation—universal mankind.

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In the eyes of his early followers he was a Jewish Messiah. Everything that was preached later as the substance of Christianity was foreign to them and they could not have understood it. Yet this community of the faithful contained the kernel of the seed that blossomed forth within a few years into a new faith that changed the Jesus they knew into the strange figure of the Christ, a savior-god, imported from a culture that spelled heathenism to their Jewish minds and hearts.

### HELLENISTIC JUDAISM

It has been well said that while Rome conquered Greece by force of arms, it was Greece that conquered Rome by power of thought. The Greeks brought with them their naturalistic philosophy, their metaphysics, and their variety of religious cults; the Jews brought their supernatural ethical system. By the time of Jesus, the interaction between the two cultures had produced an amalgam of Judaized Hellenism (or of Hellenized Judaism) that contained the seed from which was to sprout, flower, and ripen the fruit of a new world outlook we know as Christianity; and through the latter, by the confluence of a peculiar set of circumstances, the Jesus of history—the religious genius—was to become the mythical figure of the Christ of Faith.

Of the two influences of Hellenistic civilization, namely, philosophical thought and religious cults, the religious cults naturally produced the strongest impression on Judaism; even the philosophy was bent in the direction of supernatural religion. Furthermore, it is only to be expected that the influence of the religious cults on

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the masses of Jews would be greater than that of philosophy, since the average mind can find small value in philosophical speculation as compared with a cult which sets forth definite beliefs and practices and specific benefits to be derived by those who adhere to them.

These cults of which there were several varieties are known as mystery religions. All of them had, however, one common feature, namely, a mediator between man and god through whom the devotees of the particular cult could reach unity with the divine spirit and thus attain personal redemption and purification of the soul for the future life. The process of union and purification was by means of a mysterious rite kept secret from all but the initiated. There were four stages to the rite: 1. preliminary step of purification, 2. the communication of the mystic knowledge by a sermon or exhortation, 3. the revelation of holy things through some pageant or mystic drama, concluding in a solemn sacrament in which the votary was united to the divinity by eating some holy food, 4. the crowning or garlanding of the mystic, who thereby became a privileged person. Of the many gods, union with whom was a way to redemption and assurance of immortality, the Greek Dionysius and the Persian Mithras are outstanding. Mithras, according to legend, was born of a rock, the marvel being seen only by a certain shepherd who brought gifts and adored him. When his work on earth was finished, he was taken in a chariot to the habitation of the immortals from where he watches and protects the faithful. All the gods of the mysteries were the incarnation of the divine power.

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The extent of the influence of the gods of the mystery religions on the Jews of Palestine we learn from the First and Second Books of the Maccabees in which we are told of the nation being divided into two parties, one consisting of the aristocrats espousing Hellenism, and the other of the more common people stubbornly loyal to the Jewish law and bitterly opposed to Hellenism. As early as 300 B. C. a Greek historian speaks of Jews who had deserted their traditional religion; and in the Second Book of the Maccabees we find a narrative of how the high priest Jason dispatched a deputation to Tyre from Jerusalem carrying an offering for the quinquennial games of the Greek god. In the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, 178-166 B. C., the priests set up a gymnasium and theatre in Jerusalem, both associated with pagan mythology and pagan ceremonies. They built palaces in the Greek style and went as far as to attempt to foist Greek religious cults on the Jewish community. Some of the priests even deserted temple worship and participated in the sports of the gymnasium. In I Maccabees we are told that "they made themselves uncircumcised, and were sold to do mischief." The priest Menelaus even set about to stamp out Judaism and the sanctuary at Jerusalem was turned into a temple of Zeus Olympios, and that on Mount Gerizim became a temple of Zeus Zenius. "All manner of abominations were set up in the sanctuary; the observances of the Sabbath and festivals were forbidden, the people were brought by constraint to eat of the sacrifices on the birthday of the king, who had proclaimed his own divinity, and on the day of the feast of Bacchus they were compelled to go in procession



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carrying branches of ivy. Throughout the country the Jews were compelled to adopt paganism and partake of heathen sacrifices, and the penalty of death was prescribed for men, women, or children who refused. The way had been prepared by Hellenizing Jews and conciliating pagans who, by a bastard kind of comparative religious science, identified the Jewish God with Dionysius Sabazuis or with Zeus.”<sup>1</sup>

The influence of Hellenistic religion and thought, marked as it was upon the Jews of Palestine, was direct and still greater on the Jews dispersed throughout the Roman Empire outside the borders of the Jewish homeland. The Jews of the Diaspora were not only surrounded by a Greek-speaking cosmopolitan population, but lived in its midst and rapidly assimilated its culture. Greek became their mother tongue and they knew the Scriptures only in the Greek translation. As they assimilated the religious ideas of the people about them, they began to interpret the Scriptures in terms of those ideas. Such interpretation reached its culmination in the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria who lived at the commencement of the Christian Era. In Philo’s doctrines of God and his relation to men Greek thought is paramount, although he remained a Jew. But his Judaism is a complete modification of the traditional kind, in that it “virtually consists in the formal claims, that the Jewish people are by reason of the Mosaic revelation in possession of the highest religious knowledge—one might almost say of the true

<sup>1</sup>Norman Bentwich, *Hellenism*, p. 97.

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religious illumination. In a material respect, Greek views have gained the upper hand. For even his theology is only so far Jewish as to insist on monotheism and on the worship of God apart from images. In this, however, it stands in opposition only to the polytheism of the heathen religions, but not to the ideas of God of Greek philosophy, which on the contrary Philo very closely follows. Thus his Judaism is already very powerfully modified. Moreover the specifically Jewish, i.e., the particularistic notions are embraced by him in a form which is tantamount to their denial.”<sup>2</sup>

Philo's fundamental idea is of Greek origin. God and the world are opposed in nature, for God is perfect, the world is imperfect. As perfect, God is eternal, unchangeable, self-sufficing, complete in Himself, and therefore indefinable, since to define is to limit. We cannot therefore say what God is, we can only say that He is. He is a pure, absolute Platonic form, from which all perfection in man is derived. As absolute perfection, God cannot enter into direct touch with the world of matter which would defile him. His only contact is therefore through some intermediate powers or beings. Before creating the world, God created the prototypes, the ideas of everything in the world, which are their active causes and give matter whatever order it contains. These spiritual powers are then the means through which God acts on the world and exist only in the Divine thought. They are the infinite powers of an infinite God. These powers play a dual role in that they are on the one hand identical with God

<sup>2</sup>Emil Schurer, *A History of the Jewish People*, pp. 368-369.

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so that through them the finite can partake in God; while on the other hand they must also be different from Him in order that He may remain apart from any contact with the finite. In other words, to keep God apart from the world and yet enable the world to participate in God, the intermediaries must be at the same time identical with him but also apart from him. To all this Philo adds the Logos, which is the power of God, the active Divine intelligence, the idea which embraces all other ideas and the power which embraces all other powers, and which is neither created nor uncreated after the manner of finite things. The Logos is the ambassador of God, the instrument by which he made the world, by which He delivers his revelation to man, as well as the mediator for the relation of man and the world to God. The Logos intercedes for the world to God. But the Logos is not of the world, any more than are the intermediary Divine powers. The Logos is then neither a person separate from God nor God in some aspect of his activity. The Logos is both, and therefore neither one nor the other exclusively. It is from God and therefore not of God. It stands thus between the two and is the medium of their mutual relation. It is both infinite and finite at the same time. Philo thus postulates in the Logos an intermediate being between the world and God, combining Jewish theology with Greek philosophy. The Jewish doctrine of the wisdom, the spirit, the word of God is brought in touch with the Platonic doctrine of ideas and the soul of the world as well as with the Stoic doctrine of the Deity as the active reason of the world.

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Here we have the elements of the new faith in the offing, concocted out of Judaism modified by Hellenistic cult and thought, with a population both Jewish and Gentile ready to receive it, calling only for a catalytic agent to fuse it into one unit. This agent was Paul of Tarsus.

### PAUL, THE CHRIST-INTOXICATED MAN

What we know of Paul's relationship to the community of disciples in Jerusalem is gathered from the Book of Acts. But here we get only a bald narrative of events. Paul appears on the scene some three years after the crucifixion as a persecutor of the Jewish-Christian communities that were spreading throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria. He began his persecutions in Jerusalem, where, we are told, "he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women, committed them to prison." But this did not satisfy him. He wanted to spread his activities to the communities beyond Jerusalem, and particularly to the flourishing community of Damascus. So, "yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," he asked for authority to go to Damascus to visit the Synagogues, "that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound into Jerusalem." As he came near Damascus an overwhelming experience occurred to him that changed his future course of action. A voice came to him saying, "Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick

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against the pricks." And he trembling and astonished said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the Lord said unto him, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

So Paul, on arriving in Damascus joined the disciples and "preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." The Jews took counsel to kill him, but the disciples, learning of the plot, helped him escape. On returning to Jerusalem "he essayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." He was sponsored by Barnabas, who assured the disciples of his earnestness, "how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." This reassured them, and Paul became a trusted member of the apostles and was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. His disputes with the Grecians, however, aroused antagonism, and the brethren thought it best to retire him from the scene. So Paul returned to his home in Tarsus.

The next we hear of him is in connection with the problem that arose regarding the admission of Gentiles into the new dispensation. In Antioch some of the apostles "spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus." The mother church at Jerusalem, hearing of the new development, sent Barnabas to Antioch to investigate the situation. Barnabas found the situation very promising, and he brought Paul to help him with the work. "And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught many people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

From this time on, Paul becomes the central figure

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in the spread of Christianity to the Gentiles, a movement that began as a Jewish sect, an extension of Judaism, and ended in a complete break with Judaism. This was the work of Paul. Without him, Christianity would have remained a Jewish movement with Gentiles admitted only on condition that they adopt Judaism. What led Paul to preach Jesus to the Gentiles, and why did he succeed on so vast a scale? Paul himself was not a Christian in the sense of the later Christianity of the Christian Church. His immediate successors, i.e., the founders of Christian theology, rejected him, and the Church has never fully accepted him. He would not have subscribed to the Nicene Creed, nor to any other creed of the church. But he prepared the way for all future developments by his conception of Jesus, his break with Judaism and his missionary activities among the Gentiles; and as such he is the real founder of Christianity. What was his conception of Jesus whom he had never heard or seen, and how did he come by that conception?

The answer is to be found in Paul's background of education and in his psychology as revealed in his Epistles.

Paul was, as he describes himself, "a Hebrew of Hebrew parents, as to the Law, a Pharisee, so zealous for it that he was a persecutor of the Church, without reproach as to the way he fulfilled the Law." But, from what happened to him in the course of a few years of his life, he was more than a Hebrew zealous for the observance of the Law. He was, like Jesus, a spiritual genius, for just as Jesus had protested against the routine legalisms of the Law and those of the Scribes and

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Pharisees, so Paul concluded that for salvation, for genuine spiritual regeneration, something more than outer conformity to legalisms was essential. This conclusion of Paul's, rising from his spiritual travail which culminated in his conversion, in the transformation of his whole personality, is in every respect similar to that of Jesus who found the old commandments inadequate for the spiritual life; that conformity to what was said of old only resulted in leading the old life of smug self-satisfaction and self-righteousness. Paul and Jesus underwent the same spiritual development, and had Jesus left a record of his spiritual struggle as Paul has, it is certain that the account would be the same in substance.

It was inevitable therefore that Paul should find in the end what Jesus had found; or, in other words, that he should come to Jesus, should discover him, for the spirit of Jesus was in him. But it was also inevitable that Paul, because of his early environment, education, and experience, should discover himself in a manner different from that of Jesus and therefore modify Jesus.

Let us see then what conclusions Paul reached as to the way of spiritual regeneration, and just what it was in his past experience that made such a conclusion inevitable; since it is of the nature of all creative experience that the new arises out of the old as a transformation of it, and therefore the seed of the new arises from and is nurtured by the old.

Paul speaks of his zeal for the Law. This is significant. He did not simply accept the Law as a finality and conform to it. He was zealous for it, namely, he sought desperately for something through the Law. And what

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he sought he tells us in his own words. "We know that the Law is spiritual," he writes, "but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practice. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see a different law in my members warring against the law in my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members." There is therefore no salvation in the law. And yet there is the longing for that salvation, for that emancipation from the sin which is in his members and of which the law cannot rid him. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" This was the inner cry of Paul, the cry of the spirit for overcoming the flesh, and the law could not help him, for it was not in him, did not arise out of him, but came from without. It was not the spirit; it was the letter, cold, formal, uninspiring. But then why was the law good? Of what use was it? The answer is that the law is good in that it made him aware of sin. "Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law; for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt



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not covet; but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting; for apart from the law, sin is dead. And I was alive apart from the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which was unto life, this I found unto death; for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me. So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good."

So he was helpless to find salvation of himself. Of himself he could only follow the law; and the more zealous he was in its pursuit the more conscious he became of sin. He had to have help; and what he had to have he had to find. The creative urge would find expression, come to birth, and he be reborn with it. He had to have what Jesus had found, the inner vision, the transforming revelation of himself to himself. It was working in him; but it had not matured. Where was help to come from? Only from within himself, from his own experience. The mature fruit is but an expression, an objective manifestation, of the potentialities of the seed of experience. And in Paul's experience there was the seed which he sought because he needed it, because he had to have it. Creative-mindedness is predisposed to those phases in its environment that it needs as the raw material for its creative operations. And in Paul's environment that raw material was present in the mystery religions with their savior-gods.

Paul was a Hellenistic Jew born and reared in Tarsus, a center of Hellenistic culture, and came in contact with the mystery cults. His nature inclined him in favor of

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their central doctrine of a divinized hero, union with whom meant rising to a new life, but his Jewishness deterred him from accepting all the tenets of the cults. He was at once attracted and repelled. But the conflict had to be resolved, and help again came because it had to come. He went to Jerusalem where he heard of the new savior, a Jewish savior, a Messiah, one of his own people, a Messiah who was part of his tradition as a Jew. He was attracted to him, but he was also repelled, for he was zealous for the law, and the followers of the new Messiah, he was told, were blasphemers. So he set out to persecute them. And then the inevitable happened. The seed that had been germinating came to fruition because of favorable circumstances. The new faith had nothing in it that had kept him from the cults, while the law he had experienced was insufficient for what he was seeking. So, Jesus became the savior-god. The idea of the savior-god of whom he had heard met in Jesus the spirit of life that he sought. The savior-god and the Jewish Messiah fused into one, and in the fusion both became modified, as the whole is different from the parts from which it emerges. The spirituality of Jesus, which was also that of Paul, entered into the mysticism of the savior-god, and the mysticism of the savior-god, which was also that of Paul, entered into the spiritual Jesus. The two became one, and this one was the new, reborn, regenerated, saved, Paul. From now on it was no longer Paul who lived, but Jesus in Paul. Jesus was the spiritual redeemer, the true savior, in whom one died to the law by being reborn in the spirit. The sin of which the law made one conscious but from which

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it could not redeem, now found its redeemer, and Paul became whole. "Through the law I have died to the law that I might live unto God."

The overwhelming experience determined all of Paul's subsequent activities and thought processes. The followers of Jesus whom he had considered as enemies now became his brethren. But that could not be enough. Jesus could not be meant for the Jews only. As a Messiah in the ordinary sense, he was for the Jews as promised by the Prophets, and as such he was accepted by his followers. For Paul he was a personal redeemer, living in whom was a rebirth into a new way of life, and as such he was significant for all men. Paul therefore was bound to break with the Jewish churches and with Judaism as a whole. The law was no longer necessary, since rebirth in Jesus, living in Jesus, made one Jesus-like and therefore beyond sin. The law was then abrogated, and with its passing all distinction between Jew and Gentile, man and woman, also passed away. Jesus had broken down all barriers between races and peoples by the implication of his teachings. Paul did so by direct claims as to the place of Jesus in the life of the individual. He was emphatic: "There can be neither Jew nor Greek; there can be neither bound nor free; there can be no male and female," because all are one in Jesus.

So Paul set out to Christianize the world, to transmit his experience to mankind. The Jesus of history became the Christ of faith, and a new religion arose from the fusion of two opposing cultures, of Hebraism and Hellenism, through the genius of one personality. Had it not been for Paul, it is most probable that Christianity would

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have died by the end of the first century with the passing of the sects of Jewish Christians.

So Paul is the founder of Christianity. But it is important, in view of subsequent developments, to see clearly what it is that Paul taught as constituting the Christian life. He does not leave us in doubt on that point. The religious way of life Paul teaches is very close to what Jesus taught.

The thought of Paul, as that of Jesus, dwells exclusively on the relationship between God and man, and on man's possibility for attaining God, of becoming god-like. For this the law is not sufficient. There must be complete surrender of the self, the giving up of the self of the world and a return to the self of the spiritual realm, the self that is of God. Jesus demanded of those who would follow him that they must give up everything they prized of worldly goods and ambitions—even father, mother, and family—and yield completely to the spirit. Paul likewise calls for a complete transformation of allegiances, a transvaluation of values by living in Jesus; a dying to the flesh, to the world, and a rebirth in the spirit. Where Jesus called on men to be perfect as their Father in heaven was perfect, Paul asked men to be perfect as Jesus was perfect, and through Jesus to attain godliness. Jesus was of God to restore man to God by revealing his perfect nature to man on earth. For Jesus man could reach God directly by seeking him within himself, by being true to the divine in his nature. For Paul the divine in man could be reached by becoming like the divine being Jesus who revealed God to man. Jesus was the example, in the flesh, of the divine nature of God.

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The result, then, is the same whether man attains God, divinity, directly or through Jesus.

Similarly, as Jesus taught that the spirit makes the law superfluous in that the spirit leads to action in keeping with itself, so Paul insisted that in Jesus man becomes free of the law, and therefore salvation is by faith and not by works. The faith Paul speaks of is not the easy way of assent to some dogma. It is the faith he himself had experienced, the dawning of a new consciousness, a new vision of life that meant a new way of living, and not merely a new way of 'believing. Paul knew what he was talking about, for he had gone through the fires of faith and come out cleansed. He no longer needed the law to coerce him to good works. His works flowed from his faith, from his inner being. Faith emancipates from the law, for the law is but a poor substitute for the faith. There is no salvation in conformity. Salvation lies in inner conviction. Paul's contention, then, that salvation is by faith in Jesus, by experiencing Jesus within oneself and thereby becoming Jesus-like, is in every respect like the injunction of Jesus that the kingdom of God is within man. For both, salvation was a struggle, a striving, a search, leading to a regeneration; a death to the old life and a birth into the new: "Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live by the Spirit let us also walk by the Spirit." "So that, if any man is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away; nay, has become new." "The death that Christ died is a death unto sin once for all; the life that He lives, He lives for God. Even so, count yourselves dead for sin but alive for God

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in Christ Jesus." "For you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit; if it be so that the Spirit of God is dwelling in you; and if any have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. But if Christ is in you, then the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit of life because of righteousness." In these utterances lies Paul's conception of the spiritual life, in every respect the conception of Jesus. Neither had any use for creeds, dogmas and institutions. Both stressed the individual and the inner spirit. Both had undergone a transforming experience; Paul in Jesus and Jesus in God. This was the only law they knew, the law for the living necessity of the spirit seeking its realization. Neither was out to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. This law they sought to establish, and not to establish a new movement of new legalisms, beliefs, and practices. Both were teachers, not preachers; restorers, not reformers. What man needed was to be aroused to his true nature, and he will seek to restore himself to what he is in substance. Both knew from experience that the needs of the spirit transcend all laws that would imprison it. The spirit can know only the law of its own necessity for expression. Laws enslave; the spirit must have freedom to try its wings. Those who can be enslaved by laws are of slavish disposition. Because they lack the inner spirit to guide them, they need the outer law to rule them. Such a spirit of creative living possessed Jesus and possessed Paul; and both revolted against the deadening letter. Only in Jesus that spirit burnt bright from the very beginning, while in Paul it smouldered until a spark from without set it aflame. That spark was Jesus. So Jesus became for him

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the way and the life. The historical personage was transformed into a divine being, but retained the spirit of the historical personage. "Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh; even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more."

### THE AFTERMATH

The rest of the story of Christianity is as familiar as it is sordid. It is the story of a return to legalisms, with the substituting of new ways of believing about old ways of living for the new way of life, the all-inclusive surrender of the flesh to the spirit called for by both Jesus and Paul. This is the fate of all genius at the hands of its disciples. Where the genius utters the spirit through the letter, the disciples can see only the surface letter and substitute it for the inherent spirit. The letter of the law becomes the life of the spirit, and instead of the flesh being reborn in the spirit, the spirit dies in the flesh. Therefore, when Paul arrived at the conception of Jesus as the spiritual redeemer of all men and began to teach him as such to the multitudes he inadvertently opened the door that led within a short span of years to the establishment of Christianity as a new system of legalisms, different only in what it stressed from the legalisms of Hebraism, which he had found insufficient for the spiritual life. The Jesus in whom he had found salvation soon became the new great law-giver and judge, and the righteousness which is of the law came back as the goal of man's striving, as it was that of the Scribes and Pharisees. A new Pharisaism, differing only in its degree of tyranny from the old, became established in

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the name of him who had denounced the Pharisees as the enemies of the life of the spirit.

The reason for the degradation of Jesus through Paul, though not by Paul, is obvious. As the disciples of Jesus could understand his teaching about the new kingdom of heaven on earth only in their own terms as an earthly kingdom in which they would rule, so those who listened to Paul, whether Hellenized Jews or Gentiles, could understand his teachings of Jesus as the savior only in the sense of the savior-god they knew of the mystery cults as a divinized hero, union with whom through mysterious rituals and ceremonials ensured the initiate of a blissful immortality in the life to come. The teachings of either Jesus or Paul were necessarily only for the aristocrats of the spiritual life; for those who shared with them the hunger for spirituality. Of this the multitude can know nought, and when Christianity began to be preached to the multitude it had to become what the multitude could grasp and was willing to buy at a bargain. He who would attract the multitude must become as the multitude; and an idea that is intended to be accepted by the multitude must become a multitude-idea. When we speak then of the spread of Christianity, we in reality mean the surrender of the spiritual Christianity of Paul to the cults of paganism and Hebraic legalism.

It was also inevitable that as the letter of the law displaced the spirit of the religious life, strife should arise within the church as to what constituted correct beliefs and right practices. And as the enforcement of whatever is considered correct doctrine depends upon temporal power, the leaders of each faction would seek to



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curry favor with the temporal powers in order to enforce their respective doctrines, and to suppress their opponents. Each party would also be on guard against any heretics outside the church who might question its doctrines. The history of Christianity thus becomes the disgraceful record of strife within and persecution without, in the interest of secular power. So in the name of Jesus who taught the brotherhood of man there arose a powerful institution, an ecclesiastical hierarchy, that has written into the pages of history a story of strife, suspicion, and clash among men and persecution and torture of men.

Here we have the story of religion versus the religions, or supernaturalism versus naturalism in religion. Both supernatural Judaism and Christianity had to reject the naturally religious Jesus. Judaism had to reject him in order to survive, and Christianity had to reject him in order to triumph. And throughout the centuries the two have been at each other's throats, each claiming divine sanction for its doctrines and as being the appointed agency of God to establish peace on earth and good will among men. The fruits have been enmity, suspicion and bloodshed. In truth, the great Galilean foretold his own destiny at the hands of supernaturalism: "The foxes have their holes, the birds of the air their nests, but the son of man hath nowhere to lay his head."

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